



2020 State Legislative Platform

ABOUT SCAG

Founded in 1965, the Southern California Association of Governments (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. The agency 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.

In addition to the six counties and 191 cities that make up SCAG's region, there are six County Transportation Commissions that hold the primary responsibility for programming and implementing transportation projects, programs and services in their respective counties. Additionally, SCAG Bylaws provide for representation of Native American tribes, Air Quality Districts, and the Transportation Corridor Agencies on the Regional Council and Policy Committees.

SCAG'S LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

SCAG maintains a State and Federal Legislative Program, which consists of the Regional Council's positions on policies and legislative initiatives related to SCAG's core planning and policy areas—transportation, air quality, freight/goods movement, housing, environmental impact, sustainability, and economic recovery and job creation—that need the leadership and support of the California State Legislature and Congress to resolve challenges facing the SCAG region.

SCAG's legislative efforts are the product of a committee process whereby the agency's Legislative/Communications & Membership Committee, comprised of elected officials from throughout the region, identifies and recommends specific legislative action for consideration by the Regional Council with respect to state and federal legislation affecting the SCAG region.

The following state legislative principles for 2020 encompass broad, policy-oriented objectives of the agency that build upon long-standing, Regional Council-adopted policies.

STATE

Active Transportation

1. Support increased funding to the state's Active Transportation Program (ATP) to provide the resources necessary for First/Last Mile Improvements (i.e., pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to connect transit riders to stations); separated, on-street bike facilities to increase safety; multi-use trails (i.e., along river and utility corridors, rails to trails projects, etc.); Safe Routes to School Programs; and other strategies to increase safe walking and biking.
2. Support efforts that build off the many successes of the ATP by simplifying project delivery, building local capacity to deliver transformative projects, and providing regions greater flexibility to innovate and strategically invest funds to meet local needs.
3. Support and encourage investing in active transportation infrastructure as a component of other state-funded transportation improvement projects recognizing the critical role walking, biking, and complete streets serve in connecting the multi-modal transportation system.
4. Support legislation that protects the safety of active transportation users and ensure any new legislation related to new mobility devices (scooters, etc.) and automated vehicles adequately addresses the needs of these modes.

Affordable Housing

5. Continue to refine and update cap-and-trade's Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC) guidelines to better reflect the reality of Southern California's growth patterns, such as Integrated Connectivity Projects. Support a regional equity goal for the programming of AHSC revenues, and commit to continued resources for technical assistance and capacity building.
6. Advocate for the consistency within state law the sometimes competing demands contained within SB 375 and the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).
7. Support the restoration and expansion of tax increment tools to build affordable housing stock, improve public transit, and reduce climate-warming carbon emissions. Incentivize collaboration among potentially impacted jurisdictions by sharing the net proceeds from future tax increment financing districts, and emphasize tax increment as a public financing tool that does not increase taxes to residents.
8. Advocate for the reinstatement of the practice that allows cities and counties to share or trade RHNA allocations as a tool that equips local jurisdictions to facilitate not only effective planning for housing, but its actual development.
9. As the homeless population continues to grow in our region, support new state funding programs to assist cities, counties, and regional collaborations to address the challenges associated with homelessness.

Building Resilience

10. Advocate that communities affected by natural disasters receive the resources they need to rebuild.
11. Support programs that provide the resources necessary for communities to prepare for the consequences of a changing climate and resulting natural disasters.

Cap & Trade

12. Support transparency, sufficient allocation, and equitable distribution to the SCAG region of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) resources commensurate with the region's responsibility and opportunity in meeting the state's overall GHG reduction goals.
13. Support continued investment in GGRF-funded programs that reflect the physical and social realities of the diverse communities across the SCAG region, such as the Clean Vehicle Rebate Project, Single-Family Energy Efficiency, and Low Income Weatherization programs.

14. Offer state-funded technical assistance to communities throughout California to more successfully access GGRF resources and support efforts to increase accessibility to GGRF-funded programs by directing outreach to programs for which the regions of the state are best suited to achieve GHG reduction.
15. Support program guidelines and scoring criteria that recognize and are sensitive to California's urban and suburban built environment.
16. Support the increased percentage of the continuous appropriations for the GGRF-funded Transit & Intercity Rail Capital Program and Low Carbon Transit Operations Program as a way to promote transit expansion, ridership, and carbon reduction.

Congestion Reduction

17. Support legislation that expands access to commuter benefit programs for employees.
18. Support legislation that would develop new strategies for reducing congestion caused by school trips, such as expanding access to free or reduced student transit passes, supporting school bussing programs, or funding ongoing Safe Routes to Schools programs.
19. Support local pilot programs and funding mechanisms that employ innovative transportation strategies that reduce congestion and improve mobility, such as congestion or cordon pricing systems, while promoting equity measures.
20. Support dedicated funding for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs and strategies.

Freight & Goods Movement

21. Support increased funding to the Trade Corridors Enhancement Program (TCEP), building upon the success of the Trade Corridors Improvement Fund (TCIF), to provide the resources necessary for critical infrastructure enhancements along the State's high-volume freight corridors.
22. Support funding to preserve and maintain transportation infrastructure for key regional goods movement infrastructure and corridors that link freight facilities and systems to the rest of the nation.
23. Support the creation of programs designed to assist in leveraging technology to improve freight mobility, increase goods movement efficiency, reduce harmful emissions, mitigate negative impacts on disadvantaged communities, and address shifting consumer behaviors (i.e., e-commerce).

Government Efficiency

24. Update the Ralph M. Brown Act to give public agencies the flexibility to omit a lengthy and time-consuming "Roll Call" process during a public vote, while maintaining the existing practice of recording and publishing the individual members' votes and making those votes available for public review.

Project Streamlining

25. Support California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reform to expedite and streamline both project development and delivery, especially for transportation, transit-oriented, infill, and/or housing projects.
26. Support measures that require transparency in CEQA litigation and eliminate duplicative CEQA lawsuits.
27. Support innovative approaches to reform and streamline CEQA where reasonable, including, but not limited to, proposals to establish a CEQA-specific court or judicial procedure that is specialized in CEQA case law and related statutes in an effort to expedite legal review of CEQA challenges.
28. Provide judicial streamlining and an accelerated schedule for judicial review for projects challenged under CEQA when those projects have a clear public benefit, such as transportation, transit-oriented, infill, and/or housing projects.

Technology & Data

29. Support the incorporation of new technologies and innovations into national and state transportation systems, such as advancements in alternatively powered zero/near-zero emission vehicles, autonomous

vehicles, aviation, maritime, commerce, and small electric mobility devices that both improve transportation accessibility, efficiency, and capacity and reduce environmental impacts.

30. Secure funding to support the coordination among state agencies, MPOs, and other government entities to collect and share data, which reflects emerging technologies and mobility choices.
31. Encourage and support legislation related to Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), motorized scooters, and bike share systems to ensure new regulations adequately protect users of all modes and support the ability of local jurisdictions to secure access to public interest data, including ridership data, for local and regional planning purposes.
32. Encourage and support the coordination between the State and the U.S. Census Bureau's effort for developing and using census products, including the decennial U.S. Census, America Community Survey, and Census Transportation Planning Package.

Transportation Development Act

33. Support the development of greater efficiencies within the Transportation Development Act while streamlining and updating performance metrics relating to farebox recovery.
34. Support existing statutory authorization allowing SCAG to receive up to three-quarters of one percent of TDA revenues from SCAG-region county transportation commissions for transportation planning and programming responsibilities.

Transportation Funding

35. Protect all existing and new sources of transportation funding from borrowing, use for any purpose other than transportation, or new conditions on the distributions of funds that reprioritize transportation projects.
36. Support regional equity consideration for any funding source to ensure Southern California receives its fair share of funding based upon population, burden, and other quantifiable measures corresponding with the funding source.
37. Support efforts that reduce the expense of transportation improvement projects by controlling the escalating costs associated with stormwater runoff requirements.
38. Support increased funding for transportation projects based on applied regional performance metrics.
39. Support new funding for transportation agencies to offset the cost of implementing climate change initiatives, such as the Innovative Clean Transit regulation and the purchase of zero emission vehicles and infrastructure.
40. Support legislation that would decrease the voter approval threshold—from the current requirement of 67% to 55%—for the creation, extension, or increase of local transportation tax measures similar to the authority given to school districts.
41. Reemphasize the need for the California High Speed Rail Authority to secure funding from non-Prop. 1A sources for other critical rail infrastructure projects, such as grade separations, to deliver the balance of the Authority's \$1 billion commitment to the Southern California region.

Transportation Safety

42. Maintain active participation in the state's Zero Traffic Fatalities Task Force, which will compile a report to the Secretary of Transportation to evaluate whether an alternative to the current process for setting speed limits should be considered and make recommendations on other steps to increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety.
43. Work with the state and local partners to identify new tools and funding mechanisms to achieve the region's safety targets.