



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
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SPECIAL MEETING OF THE

LEGISLATIVE/ COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

***Members of the Public are Welcome to Attend
In-Person & Remotely***

***Monday, March 10, 2025
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.***

To Attend In-Person:

**SCAG Main Office – Policy B Meeting Room
900 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1700
Los Angeles, CA 90017**

To Attend and Participate on Your Computer:

<https://scag.zoom.us/j/84376025323>

To Attend and Participate by Phone:

**Call-in Number: 1-669-900-6833
Meeting ID: 843 7602 5323**

PUBLIC ADVISORY

If members of the public wish to review the attachments or have any questions on any of the agenda items, please contact Maggie Aguilar at (213) 630-1420 or via email at aguilarm@scag.ca.gov. Agendas & Minutes are also available at: <https://scag.ca.gov/meetings-leadership>.

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Instructions for Attending the Meeting

To Attend In-Person and Provide Verbal Comments: Go to the SCAG Main Office located at 900 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1700, Los Angeles, CA 90017 or any of the remote locations noticed in the agenda. The meeting will take place in the Policy B Meeting Room on the 17th floor starting at 3:30 p.m.

To Attend by Computer: Click the following link: <https://scag.zoom.us/j/84376025323>. If Zoom is not already installed on your computer, click “Download & Run Zoom” on the launch page and press “Run” when prompted by your browser. If Zoom has previously been installed on your computer, please allow a few moments for the application to launch automatically. Select “Join Audio via Computer.” The virtual conference room will open. If you receive a message reading, “Please wait for the host to start this meeting,” simply remain in the room until the meeting begins.

To Attend by Phone: Call (669) 900-6833 to access the conference room. Given high call volumes recently experienced by Zoom, please continue dialing until you connect successfully. Enter the **Meeting ID: 843 7602 5323**, followed by #. Indicate that you are a participant by pressing # to continue. You will hear audio of the meeting in progress. Remain on the line if the meeting has not yet started.

Instructions for Participating and Public Comments

Members of the public can participate in the meeting via written or verbal comments.

- In Writing:** Written comments can be emailed to: ePublicComment@scag.ca.gov. Written comments received **by 5pm on Friday, March 7, 2025** will be transmitted to members of the legislative body and posted on SCAG’s website prior to the meeting. You are **not** required to submit public comments in writing or in advance of the meeting; this option is offered as a convenience should you desire not to provide comments in real time as described below. Written comments received after 5pm on **Friday, March 7, 2025** will be announced and included as part of the official record of the meeting. Any writings or documents provided to a majority of this committee regarding any item on this agenda (other than writings legally exempt from public disclosure) are available at the Office of the Clerk, at 900 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1700, Los Angeles, CA 90017 or by phone at (213) 630-1420, or email to aguilarm@scag.ca.gov.
- Remotely:** If participating in real time via Zoom or phone, please wait for the presiding officer to call the item for which you wish to speak and use the “raise hand” function on your computer or *9 by phone and wait for SCAG staff to announce your name/phone number.
- In-Person:** If participating in-person, you are invited but not required, to fill out and present a Public Comment Card to the Clerk of the Board or other SCAG staff prior to speaking. It is helpful to indicate whether you wish to speak during the Public Comment Period (Matters Not on the Agenda) and/or on an item listed on the agenda.

General Information for Public Comments

Verbal comments can be presented in real time during the meeting. Members of the public are allowed a total of 3 minutes for verbal comments. The presiding officer retains discretion to adjust time limits as necessary to ensure efficient and orderly conduct of the meeting, including equally reducing the time of all comments.

For purpose of providing public comment for items listed on the Consent Calendar, please indicate that you wish to speak when the Consent Calendar is called. Items listed on the Consent Calendar will be acted on with one motion and there will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the legislative body so requests, in which event, the item will be considered separately.

In accordance with SCAG’s Regional Council Policy, Article VI, Section H and California Government Code Section 54957.9, if a SCAG meeting is “willfully interrupted” and the “orderly conduct of the meeting” becomes unfeasible, the presiding officer or the Chair of the legislative body may order the removal of the individuals who are disrupting the meeting.

OUR MISSION

To foster innovative regional solutions that improve the lives of Southern Californians through inclusive collaboration, visionary planning, regional advocacy, information sharing, and promoting best practices.

OUR VISION

Southern California’s Catalyst for a Brighter Future

OUR CORE VALUES

Be Open | Lead by Example | Make an Impact | Be Courageous



LEGISLATIVE/COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

TELECONFERENCE AVAILABLE AT THESE ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS

<p>Cindy Allen City of Long Beach - City Hall 411 W. Ocean Blvd., 11th Floor Long Beach, CA 90802</p>	<p>Wendy Bucknum Murrow Development Consultants 16800 Aston, Suite 200 Irvine, CA 92606</p>	<p>Jenny Crosswhite City of Santa Paula - City Hall 970 E. Ventura Street Santa Paula, CA 93060</p>
<p>Keith Eich 4821 Daleridge Road La Canada Flintridge, CA 91011</p>	<p>Curt Hagman Chino Hills District Office 14010 City Center Drive Chino Hills, CA</p>	<p>Jan Harnik City of Palm Desert - City Hall 73-510 Fred Waring Drive Palm Desert, CA 92260</p>
<p>Mark E. Henderson City of Gardena - City Hall Management Information Room 1700 W. 162nd Street Gardena, CA 90247</p>	<p>Laura Hernandez City of Port Hueneme - City Hall 250 N. Ventura Road Port Hueneme, CA 93041</p>	<p>Patricia Lock Dawson Riverside City Hall 7th Floor Conference Room 3900 Main Street Riverside, CA 92522</p>
<p>Clint Lorimore City of Eastvale - City Hall 12363 Limonite Avenue, #910 Eastvale, CA 91752</p>	<p>Ray Marquez 15922 Old Carbon Road Chino Hills, CA 91709</p>	<p>Gil Rebollar SCAG Imperial County Regional Office 1503 N. Imperial Ave. Suite 104 El Centro, CA 92243</p>
<p>David Shapiro City of Calabasas - City Hall 100 Civic Center Way Calabasas, CA 91302</p>	<p>Donald Wagner County Administration North 400 West Civic Center Drive, 6th Floor Conference Room 601 A Santa Ana, CA 92701</p>	<p>Alan Wapner Marriott Marquis Hotel - Lobby 901 Massachusetts Avenue NW Washington, DC 20001</p>

* Under the teleconferencing rules of the Brown Act, members of the body may remotely participate at any location specified above.



LEGISLATIVE/COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE AGENDA

LCMC - Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee *Members – March 2025*

1. **Hon. Patricia Lock Dawson**
LCMC Chair, Riverside, RC District 68
2. **Hon. Margaret Finlay**
LCMC Vice Chair, Duarte, RC District 35
3. **Hon. Cindy Allen**
Long Beach, RC District 30
4. **Hon. Wendy Bucknum**
Mission Viejo, RC District 13
5. **Hon. Jenny Crosswhite**
Santa Paula, RC District 47
6. **Hon. Keith Eich**
La Canada Flintridge, District 36
7. **Sup. Curt Hagman**
San Bernardino County
8. **Hon. Jan C. Harnik**
RCTC Representative
9. **Hon. Mark Henderson**
Gardena, RC District 28
10. **Hon. Laura Hernandez**
Port Hueneme, RC District 45
11. **Hon. Clint Lorimore**
Eastvale, RC District 4
12. **Hon. Ray Marquez**
Chino Hills, RC District 10
13. **Hon. Gil Rebollar**
Brawley, RC District 1
14. **Hon. David J. Shapiro**
Calabasas, RC District 44
15. **Sup. Donald Wagner**
Orange County
16. **Hon. Alan Wapner**
SBCTA Representative
17. **Hon. Thomas Wong**
Monterey Park, District 34



LEGISLATIVE/COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE AGENDA

Southern California Association of Governments
900 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1700 – Policy B Room
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Monday, March 10, 2025
3:30 PM

The Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee may consider and act upon any of the items listed on the agenda regardless of whether they are listed as information or action items.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(The Honorable Patricia Lock Dawson, Chair)

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (Matters Not on the Agenda)

This is the time for public comments on any matter of interest within SCAG’s jurisdiction that is *not* listed on the agenda. For items listed on the agenda, public comments will be received when that item is considered. Although the committee may briefly respond to statements or questions, under state law, matters presented under this item cannot be discussed or acted upon at this time.

REVIEW AND PRIORITIZE AGENDA ITEMS

ACTION ITEMS

1. 2025-2026 Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization Priorities
(Francisco J. Barajas, Sr. Legislative Affairs Analyst, SCAG)

PPG. 6

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Forward a recommendation to “support” to the Regional Council.

2. 2025-2026 Federal Legislative Platform Update
(David Angel, Sr. Legislative Affairs Analyst, SCAG)

PPG. 18

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT



AGENDA ITEM 1

REPORT

Southern California Association of Governments
March 10, 2025

To: Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee (LCMC)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S
APPROVAL

From: Francisco Barajas, Senior Legislative Affairs Analyst
(213) 630-1400, barajasf@scag.ca.gov

Subject: 2025-2026 Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization Priorities

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Forward a recommendation to “support” to the Regional Council.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This item supports the following Strategic Priority 2: Be a cohesive and influential voice for the region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

With the Infrastructure, Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA) expiring on September 30, 2026, SCAG staff presented five suggested draft priorities for the Legislative/ Communications and Membership Committee’s (LCMC) consideration at its February 18, 2025 meeting. If supported by the LCMC and adopted by the Regional Council (RC), the draft priorities would be used for advocacy purposes as the Congress works on the next iteration of the nation’s surface transportation policy bill. Following a robust discussion, the committee voted to hold a special meeting to bring back the priorities for further deliberation, requesting staff incorporate committee feedback. In response, SCAG staff conducted additional stakeholder outreach and is now presenting eight suggested draft priorities. The additional three suggested draft priorities endeavor to capture the committee’s interest in supporting efficiencies and project streamlining efforts.

BACKGROUND:

The current iteration of the surface transportation policy bill was included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and is set to expire on September 30, 2026. The IIJA provided approximately \$550 billion in infrastructure investment over five years, including:

- \$350.8 billion for federal highways
- \$91.2 billion for federal transit programs

Congress has already begun holding hearings on the next surface transportation reauthorization bill in 2025. As these conversations continue, key priorities for the Republican-controlled Congress will include increasing emphasis on funding for state DOTs and rural communities while decreasing emphasis on climate and environmental justice, streamlining regulations, and placing an emphasis on public-private partnerships (P3s).

In preparation for conversations on surface transportation reauthorization, SCAG's federal lobbyists, Holland & Knight, facilitated a conversation on surface transportation at SCAG's main office in Los Angeles with executive and relevant program staff. A multitude of ideas were shared, discussed, and then evaluated based upon those ideas' merit, opportunity for success, and in light of various political dynamics in Washington, D.C.

In addition, SCAG staff has been participating in conversations facilitated by the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC), National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), Caltrans, and the Southern California Legislative Roundtable, a staff-level meeting of representatives from the SCAG region's county transportation commissions, air quality management districts, and ports, on the topic of surface transportation reauthorization. These conversations were helpful in terms of "trial ballooning" certain concepts, avoiding unnecessary conflict with SCAG members or partners, and identifying coalition-building opportunities.

Taking feedback into consideration from the various conversations referenced above, SCAG staff compiled five recommended priorities for the next iteration of the surface transportation reauthorization. These ideas were presented to the LCMC on Tuesday, February 18, 2025.

Prior Committee Action:

At the LCMC's February 18, 2025 meeting, members engaged in a robust discussion. Some of the discussion included the need to expand upon a draft priority expressing support for project streamlining initiatives, taking into consideration the openness that the Trump Administration has for this topic and other efforts to remove inefficient regulatory schemes.

Following the discussion, the LCMC directed staff to call a special meeting of the LCMC to be held at a later date.

In the meantime, SCAG staff continued to conduct stakeholder outreach, including communication with the region's six county transportation commissions, Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), and the Regional Council's Ex Officio Member representing the business community, Ms. Lucy Dunn.

Staff is pleased to present a modified list of recommended, draft priorities for surface transportation reauthorization for today's meeting. Building off the original five priorities

presented in February, staff recommends three additional points that endeavor to capture the committee's interest in supporting efficiencies and project streamlining efforts at the federal level. In addition, the first five suggested draft priorities were massaged to better conform their messaging with their intended audiences.

Therefore, SCAG staff recommends the LCMC forward a recommendation to the RC to adopt the following priorities.

Proposed 2025-2026 Surface Transportation Reauthorization Priorities

- 1. Preserve critical dedicated federal formula funding, adjusted for inflation, to continue the timely delivery of hard infrastructure projects without interruption, including Metropolitan Planning (PL), FTA Section 5303, and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding.**

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) were created to ensure that large investments made by the federal government during the development of the interstate system in the 1950s could be built through a more continuous and comprehensive transportation planning process bringing together local, state, and federal agencies to develop a single surface transportation plan. In addition, MPOs were tasked to act as a forum for the joint prioritization of transportation projects and distribution of federal surface transportation funds to specific projects in a region.

Metropolitan Planning, Section 5303, and STBG are critical federal formula funding streams that allow MPOs to continue the work needed to ensure there is minimal disruption to the existing pipeline of planning for and delivery of hard infrastructure projects. In the SCAG region, our Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) currently includes 1,128 projects programmed at \$38.8 billion over the next six years, vetted through a thorough and comprehensive public participation process. Formula funding such as PL support important activities, such as the development and maintenance of the FTIP, which allow for the continued distribution of federal funding and support delivery of critical transportation projects, including roads, highways, bridges, transit, and rail.

- 2. Protect vital infrastructure funding for the Southern California region to ensure continuation of economic output**

Southern California greatly benefits from a diverse set of natural ecosystems that have allowed for the development of an equally diverse economy to thrive. While our unique geography presents our region with opportunities to become an economic powerhouse for the nation, it also presents its own set of challenges as air gets trapped between our coastal and mountain regions, leading Southern California to have some of the poorest air quality in the country. The "Congestion

Mitigation and Air Quality,” or CMAQ, program was created for regions like Southern California to improve air quality by funding transportation projects that reduce congestion and meet federal air quality standards. These projects are essential to alleviating congestion in our transportation systems, addressing the need for mobility enhancements, which in turn minimize disruptions to our goods movement systems. It is imperative that this program continue, taking into consideration impacts inflation has had on funding levels.

3. Pilot a Freight Planning Program for MPOs and Local Governments

Goods movement is a critical component of the SCAG region’s economy and quality of life. The regional goods movement system is a multimodal, coordinated network that includes deep-water marine ports (including the Port of Los Angeles and Port of Long Beach), international border crossings, Class I rail lines, interstate highways, air cargo facilities, intermodal facilities, and distribution and warehousing clusters.

Global supply chains have been heavily impacted by historic events such as COVID-19 over the past decade that have both disrupted freight movement and dramatically shaped consumption and spending patterns. The current practice of focusing on just project-level planning inadequately responds to broader systemic concerns. A pilot program should be created to help MPOs and local governments develop a more cohesive freight and goods movement intermodal network, eliminating bottlenecks, identifying efficiencies, improving safety and air quality, and helping to contribute to the nation’s economic growth. Such a systems level approach to planning for goods movement could also facilitate funding, permitting, and environmental review processes to support more streamlined project delivery.

4. Continue the Safe Streets and Roads for All Program

Established under the bipartisan Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act, the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program was the first ever discretionary grant program to fund regional, local, and tribal initiatives to prevent deaths and serious injuries on local streets and roads. SCAG supports the continuation of this visionary program to address road safety through local and regional partnerships. SCAG’s two SS4A grant awards provide critical investments throughout our region to reduce rates of fatalities and serious injuries. This includes the development of our “Regional Safety Action Plan” and expansion of our open streets model that creates reliable and safe routes of travel during high volume events and civic gatherings, such as the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This planning and implementation work will be used to stimulate economic development in the region and beyond while advancing new opportunities for investment in venues that had not been considered as potential locations for large scale events before.

5. Enact a CEQA-for-NEPA Reciprocity Program in California to Streamline the Delivery of Federally Funded Projects

In California, local governments serve as lead agencies under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), meaning they have principal authority to prepare and certify environmental documents for local projects and have primary responsibility for carrying out or approving such projects. However, they lack authority to streamline and approve National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews.

CEQA was enacted by Governor Ronald Reagan in 1970 as a tool to inform public agencies and the public in California about the potential environmental effects of proposed activities. Likewise, NEPA was signed into law by President Richard Nixon the same year, requiring federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of proposed major federal actions prior to making decisions. Sharing the same goal, CEQA is the more stringent of the two, and it applies to a broader range of projects at the state and local level, often requiring a more detailed environmental analysis, robust measures to mitigate significant adverse impacts, and greater opportunities for public involvement compared to NEPA.

While programs have been authorized by Congress to provide more flexibility to states handling NEPA, including California's "NEPA Assignment," it does not address the fundamental issues of duplication, increased costs, and delays related to the overlapping requirements of CEQA and NEPA. While Caltrans has been successful in expediting transportation project delivery, local governments continue to face challenges associated with duplication, increased costs, and delays related to the overlapping requirements of state and federal laws.

Acknowledging the need to maintain the baseline requirements of NEPA to ensure environmental good stewardship, reciprocity should only be authorized in states whose environmental laws are substantially equivalent to or more stringent than NEPA, such as California.

6. Eliminate Unnecessary, Costly, and Time-Consuming Technical Studies to Qualify for a NEPA Categorical Exclusion and Help Deliver Federally Funded Infrastructure Projects Faster

A categorical exclusion (CE) is a class of actions that a federal agency has determined does not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and, as such, an environmental assessment (EA) nor an environmental impact statement (EIS) is required, saving time and resources while reducing paperwork. To qualify, an agency must prepare an analysis.

Creating Programmatic Categorical Exclusion (PCE) agreements for adoption by state and municipalities would standardize and simplify the NEPA process across various jurisdictions, ensuring consistent, fast-tracked, and timely application of categorical exclusions. These

agreements would outline specific criteria and procedures for identifying projects that qualify for expedited review and timelines for completing categorical exclusions from start to finish, enabling localities to streamline their workflows, reduce delays, maintain compliance with federal and state environmental regulations, and minimize potential legal challenges on the projects that utilize categorical exclusions.

Further, the process for pursuing CEs could be simplified through the development of a program that provides categorical exclusion or NEPA approval at the time of a federal grant award. Doing so would expedite the environmental review process by granting early clearance for projects that meet established criteria. This proactive approach would reduce project delays, minimize bureaucratic hurdles, and allow grant recipients to move forward with implementation more quickly while still ensuring compliance with environmental laws and regulations.

In SCAG's case, one component of our \$12 million Safe Streets and Roads for All grant is the piloting of quick-build demonstration activities through a competitive Call for Applications. While these quick-build projects, which are temporary by nature, will ultimately qualify for a CE, SCAG must conduct an analysis to prove it, adding an additional four to six months to the project delivery timeline before the quick-builds can get started. Had SCAG received a CE approved at the time of having been awarded the federal grant, work on the quick-build demonstrations could have already been underway.

7. Require a Singular Consistent Format for NEPA Environmental Review Documents for All Federal Agencies and Departments

The Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (FRA) made several changes to the NEPA process. Among the changes was a requirement that, in the case of a proposed action that will require action from multiple federal agencies for one project, all federal agencies involved must establish a lead agency and prepare a single, coordinated environmental document. Implementing this action would expedite permitting approvals, helping to deliver projects faster and more efficiently. SCAG is supportive of this effort.

8. Support Measures to Streamline Project Delivery and Implementation

SCAG supports streamlining and simplifying the regulatory review process, permitting and oversight, project development and delivery, and increase coordination among state and federal agencies to ensure a more efficient delivery of federally funded transportation projects.



FISCAL IMPACT:

Work associated with the 2025-2026 Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization Principles staff report is contained in the General Fund budget, Legislation 800-0160.02.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Draft 2025-2026 STR Priorities



Draft 2025-2026 Surface Transportation Reauthorization Priorities

Francisco Barajas, Sr. Legislative Affairs Analyst
March 10, 2025

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1. Preserve critical dedicated federal formula funding, adjusted for inflation, to continue the timely delivery of hard infrastructure projects without interruption, including Metropolitan Planning (PL), FTA Section 5303, and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding.

2. Protect vital infrastructure funding for the Southern California region to ensure continuation of economic output.

3. Pilot a Freight Planning Program for MPOs and Local Governments

4. Continue the Safe Streets and Roads for All Program

5. Enact a CEQA-for-NEPA Reciprocity Program in California to Streamline the Delivery of Federally Funded Projects

6. Eliminate Unnecessary, Costly, and Time-Consuming Technical Studies to Qualify for a NEPA Categorical Exclusion and Help Deliver Federally Funded Infrastructure Projects Faster

7. Require a Singular Consistent Format for NEPA Environmental Review Documents for All Federal Agencies and Departments

8. Support Measures to Streamline Project Delivery and Implementation

QUESTIONS?



AGENDA ITEM 2

REPORT

Southern California Association of Governments
March 10, 2025

To: Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee (LCMC)

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S
APPROVAL**

From: David Angel, Senior Legislative Affairs Analyst
(213) 630-1422, angel@scag.ca.gov

Subject: 2025-26 Federal Legislative Platform Update

Kome Ajise

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This item supports the following Strategic Priority 2: Be a cohesive and influential voice for the region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On February 18, 2025, staff presented the draft 2025-2026 Federal Legislative Platform (Platform) to the Legislative/ Communications & Membership Committee (LCMC). Following discussions, the LCMC voted to table the item until a special meeting of the LCMC on March 10, 2025, providing direction to staff to gather feedback from committee members. Following committee outreach, staff made edits to the Platform consistent with feedback provided by members of the LCMC. If approved by the LCMC, the Regional Council (RC) would consider the Platform's final adoption on Thursday, April 3, 2025. In addition to rephrasing items in the Platform, SCAG staff added a point related to natural disaster preparedness and response, and a point pertaining to energy reliability and resilience.

BACKGROUND AND PROCESS:

With the start of a new two-year Congressional session, staff recommends a comprehensive update to the adopted 2024 Federal Legislative Platform. While staff has historically presented the State and Federal Platforms for approval concurrently, this year, staff required additional time to refine the federal platform to ensure the region's federal priorities were adequately captured. Thus, staff is now bringing the Platform for approval at the Special March LCMC and April RC, as the committee already considered the 2025-26 State Platform at the January meeting, which the RC approved at its meeting on February 6, 2025.

As part of the Platform update, SCAG legislative staff conducted an internal review to make the platform more concise by removing redundant priorities and combining or broadening priorities already captured in the agency's priorities for a given policy area. Additionally, staff recommends

the LCMC and RC adopt the new Platform for two years, consistent with the length of congressional sessions. Following an internal review, the Legislation Department reached out to all SCAG planning departments to identify improvements and updates to the platform in response to new and emerging issues.

In addition to internal review from SCAG staff, the Legislation Department presented the platform to various stakeholders, including the Sub-Regional COG Executive Directors group and the Southern California Legislative Roundtable, comprised of the legislative staff from the SCAG region's county transportation commissions, ports, and air quality management district. Additionally, SCAG collaborated with legislative staff from stakeholders in or representing Southern California, such as the Ontario and Orange County airports, the California Transit Association (CTA), and Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC).

Prior Committee Action

After gathering and compiling feedback from internal and external groups, staff presented the draft Platform update at the February 18, 2025, LCMC with the recommendation to approve. The most prominent change was the visual presentation of the Platform in an effort to align it with Connect SoCal more explicitly. While the priorities in the legislative platforms typically align with Connect SoCal, the sub-headers (e.g., Active Transportation, Project Streamlining, Surface Transportation Policy) were reorganized to demonstrate which of the four Connect SoCal Pillars (Mobility, Communities, Environment, and Economy) they fall under. Thus, sub-headers were moved around in the Platform under their respective pillars. Additionally, redundant priorities were removed while maintaining and broadening existing priorities to create a shorter but more effective Platform overall.

New items added to the platform that were not included in the previously adopted 2024 Federal Platform included:

Mobility

Points expressing support for more resources for surface transportation passenger studies and planning activities around airports as well as modernizing eligible uses for Passenger Facility Charge revenues.

Points expressing support for more resources to increase infrastructure resilience and support for making Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) direct recipients for priority federal formula programs.

Points expressing support for the creation of an MPO program for community and economic development activities and making the Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning program permanent and expanding eligibility to include MPOs.

Communities

Modified a section to express support for new federal grant programs and increased funding for existing programs supporting increased housing development across the region.

Modified another section to express support for federal broadband programs, especially as a strategy to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Environment

No new sections or points were added beyond what was in the 2024 Federal Platform. Sections were consolidated to emphasize prioritization of support for regional equity considerations in allocation of funding to Southern California for Air Quality, Environment, and Water Infrastructure funding.

Economy

Sections were consolidated to emphasize support for funding to strengthen federal commitment to the nation's goods movement system, recognizing SCAG's pivotal role in domestic and international trade and the disproportionate impacts carried by the region.

A point was added to express support for the establishment of a Pilot Program for Freight and Goods Movement planning.

Following an in-depth discussion over the proposed platform, members of the LCMC voted to continue the item to a special meeting of the LCMC in March while directing staff to gather additional feedback from members of the LCMC. After collecting the additional input, staff made edits to the Platform that reflected the feedback received, including amending language to better align with the current administration's priorities, adding language to support additional resources for wildfire response and preparedness, and adding language to support energy reliability and resilience. Changes can be found under the following pillars:

Mobility

No changes were made in this section.

Communities

Rephrased verbiage in point one under the Racial Justice header.

Environment

Rephrased point two under the Air Quality, Environment, & Water header to generally improve the wording and added a new point to express support for additional resources for natural disaster resilience, preparedness, and response, especially as it pertains to wildfires.

Economy

Modified point four under the Technology & Data header to generally support more resources for alternative transportation infrastructure and added a new point to express support for energy reliability and resilience.

A copy of the updated Platform has been included in this report for review. If approved, staff will bring the Platform to the Regional Council for review and final adoption at its April 2025 meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Work associated with the 2025-26 Federal Legislative Platform Update staff report is contained in the General Fund budget, Legislation 800-0160.02.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Draft 2025-26 Federal Platform - March Special LCMC



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
900 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1700, Los Angeles, CA 90017
T: (213) 236- 1800 www.scag.ca.gov

2025-26 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

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 and federal legislative principles for 2025 and 2026 encompass broad, policy-oriented objectives of the agency that build upon long-standing, Regional Council-adopted policies.

Policy Statement

SCAG works in partnership with the state on locally tailored solutions to address issues of regional and statewide concern.

Because of the SCAG region’s rich diversity, one size rarely fits all. With more than 150 city councilmembers, mayors, and county supervisors serving on SCAG’s Regional Council and policy committees, the nearly 19 million people of the SCAG region deserve to be represented at the local level with the best solutions to pressing public policy issues made in collaboration with the elected officials closest to the people.

SCAG supports legislative efforts that provide funding, resources, and tools that help our region’s 191 cities, six counties, six county transportation commissions, and other member and partner organizations implement locally tailored solutions that address specific needs and meet statewide policy goals. We support efforts that leverage local knowledge from lived experiences.

The guiding ethos of the principles that follow reflect SCAG’s belief that local levels of governments need additional tools and resources to achieve the positive outcomes associated with the policy goals the region shares with the state. These principles also support and reinforce the Connect SoCal 2024 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, which the SCAG Regional Council unanimously adopted in April 2024. Connect SoCal 2024 identifies policy priorities and implementation strategies to further our goals within the four pillars of Mobility, Communities, Environment, and Economy.

Attachment: Draft 2025-26 Federal Platform - March Special LCMC (2025-2026 Federal Legislative Platform Update)

Mobility

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

1. Support increased funding for and the reauthorization of critical federal active transportation programs that local governments depend on, including the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SSFA), Healthy Streets, Active Transportation Infrastructure Improvement Programs (ATIIP), and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) as well as the creation of new tools to provide the resources necessary to implement Active Transportation strategies in Connect SoCal.

AVIATION

1. Advocate for and seek funding opportunities from the Federal Aviation Administration, which can help SCAG conduct airport surface transportation passenger studies and planning activities.
2. Support legislation that modernizes and addresses the limitations of Passenger Facility Charge Revenue (PFC), allowing local airports to prevent delays in building and fund needed infrastructure improvements to airport facilities and for projects that promote access to the airport to meet future capacity demands.

TRANSIT & RAIL

1. Support legislation and funding to expand the region's public transit and passenger rail projects and services to reduce congestion and enhance sustainability, including programs encouraging transit-oriented development (TOD) to connect housing, jobs, and mixed-use development with transportation options.
2. Support legislation that encourages the implementation of physical and digital projects that facilitate multimodal connectivity, prioritize transit and shared mobility, and improve mobility, accessibility, and safety.
3. Support legislation that encourages innovative approaches for addressing transit safety and security issues so that impacts on transit employees and the public are minimized and those experiencing issues (e.g., unhoused persons) are supported.
4. Support efforts that fund transit-oriented communities, mixed land uses, green streets strategies to reduce extreme heat and emissions exposure, and safe streets so that people of all ages and abilities can maximize opportunities for active lifestyles, access essential services, and use transit or non-motorized transportation options.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

1. Support further development and implementation of public-private partnerships (P3s) that are transparent, accountable, and marry the policy goals of the public sector with the financial expertise of the private sector to improve project development and delivery throughout the region, including support of improved P3 design-bid-build and design-build procurement processes.
2. Support private activity bonds, debt instruments that raise capital for revenue-generating highway and freight transfer projects, and restore tax exemption for advance refunding bonds, debt instruments that allow an issuer to pay off another outstanding bond to enable savings to be reinvested in additional infrastructure upgrades at airports, seaports, qualified highway or surface freight transfer facilities, affordable housing, and other projects with a clear public benefit.
3. Support efforts to protect the tax exemption of municipal bonds to ensure local jurisdictions continue to have access to the funding necessary to finance critical infrastructure projects.

PROJECT STREAMLINING

1. Support legislative streamlining and simplification measures that expedite and streamline the regulatory review processes, permitting and oversight, project development and delivery, and increase oversight and coordination among state and federal agencies.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION POLICY

1. Support a transition to a mileage-based user fee funding mechanism as a replacement to federal gas taxes to provide sustainable funding to meet our nation's transportation infrastructure needs and maintain system management, preservation, and resilience. Support measures that protect privacy, promote equity and guarantee return-to-source. Before a transition period, support adjustments to the federal gasoline taxes to maintain purchasing power.
2. Support incentive funding to reward self-help jurisdictions. This model recognizes that self-help jurisdictions take risks and make significant local investments while leveraging federal dollars to deliver transportation improvements.
3. Support sustainable solutions that restore the Highway Trust Fund's long-term solvency, including expanding tolling options on the interstate highway system and supporting states willing to research and pilot innovative revenue programs.
4. Support making the Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning permanent and expanding eligibility to include MPOs that are not landowners.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

1. Support increased dedicated MPO formula funding for planning and to provide robust regional infrastructure and transportation system investments, ensuring a world-class transportation system.
2. Support investment in and make MPOs direct recipients of the Congestion Relief Program (CRP), Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT), Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment (ATIIP), Healthy Streets, and other priority programs included in the last surface transportation reauthorization bill.
3. Support increased investment in Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) and increased cap on planning awards.
4. Support efforts to make MPOs eligible to be direct recipients for priority federal formula programs, such as freight formula funds, PROTECT, and TAP, commensurate with our opportunity to achieve federal goals.

Communities

AFFORDABLE HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS, & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. As homelessness continues to be an issue, support new federal grant programs to support cities, counties, and regional collaborations that help jurisdictions provide for the needs of the unhoused through supportive housing models and planning grants.
2. Support increased funding for critical federal programs that local governments depend on, including the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Affordable Housing Tax Credit (AFTC), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), as well as the creation of new tools to confront the housing affordability crisis and expand economic opportunity for residents in Southern California.
3. Support ongoing funding for the Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (PRO Housing) program to help local jurisdictions remove barriers to affordable housing.

BROADBAND ACCESS

1. Support programs like the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and additional funding and resources for broadband infrastructure, particularly in low-income and rural communities, tribal lands, and community anchor institutions, to bridge the digital divide.
2. Support collaboration between the federal, state, regional, and local levels of government, including MPOs and regional broadband consortia, to expedite access to broadband infrastructure funding, streamline project permitting, and achieve economies of scale.
3. Support legislative efforts that promote the integration of broadband, land use, and transportation planning as a strategy to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), and support legislative efforts that provide transportation agencies access to the middle-mile network to bolster the deployment of intelligent transportation systems.

RACIAL JUSTICE

1. Recognizing that systemic racism continues to create barriers to success for people of color, support legislative efforts that reverse the effects of unfair policies, processes, programs, and practices and empower communities that will be disproportionately impacted by climate change to address the legacy and impact of past planning decisions in the region, such as the Reconnecting Communities Program.
2. Recognizing that climate change, public health, and racial justice are interconnected, support efforts that invest in and empower communities that will be disproportionately impacted by climate change.

Environment

AIR QUALITY, ENVIRONMENT, & WATER

1. Support regional equity in funding allocations to ensure Southern California receives its fair share of grant and formula programs for climate resiliency, EV charging and fueling infrastructure, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Factors to consider include population, need (cumulative impacts), higher relative risks for natural hazards, improvement opportunities, and other quantifiable measures.
2. As zero-emission and alternative fuel vehicles and supporting infrastructure are deployed, including but not limited to electric, hydrogen, and natural gas, advocate for policies that take a life-cycle approach. For electric vehicles, in particular, support policies that ensure proper battery reuse, recycling, and disposal.
3. Building upon SCAG's work to accelerate the electrification of the vehicle fleet, support efforts that provide funding for electric and alternative fuel vehicle planning, permit streamlining, purchases, and charging/refueling infrastructure, with a focus on public investment in areas that would otherwise be neglected, such as multi-unit dwellings, rural areas, and low to middle-income neighborhoods.
4. Support legislative efforts that promote sustainable water use planning, practices, and storage, which improve regional water security and resilience in a drier environment. Provide increased resources for water infrastructure investments to serve the Southern California region's needs and ensure the effectiveness, efficiency, and resiliency of the region's water systems.
5. Support additional resources for natural disaster resilience, preparedness, and response, and to assist displaced residents and help communities recover from wildfires, earthquakes, floods.

PUBLIC HEALTH

1. Support legislative efforts that further a "Health in All Policies" approach to facilitate equitable health outcomes related to SCAG's core public health focus areas, as included in the Connect SoCal:

accessibility to healthy food, parks and open space, and other services, affordable housing, air quality, climate resiliency, economic wellbeing, health equity, physical activity, and safety.

Economy

FREIGHT & GOODS MOVEMENT

1. Support establishing a Pilot Freight Planning Program under the U.S. Department of Transportation for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), local governments, and tribes.
2. Support increased funding for maintaining and expanding transportation infrastructure for key regional goods movement corridors that link freight facilities and systems to the rest of the nation.
3. Support increased transparency measures for competitive grant awards.
4. Support increased federal freight funding by establishing a dedicated freight trust fund to distribute revenues to states and regions most impacted by goods movement.
5. Support the creation of programs designed to assist in leveraging technology and data to improve freight mobility, establish public-private partnerships, increase goods movement efficiency independently and through shared-use corridors, reduce harmful emissions, mitigate adverse impacts on disadvantaged communities, and address shifting consumer behaviors (i.e., e-commerce).
6. Support funding strategies that strengthen the federal commitment to the nation's goods movement system, recognizing both the pivotal role that the SCAG region plays in domestic and international trade and, consequently, the disproportionate impacts carried by Southern California.

TECHNOLOGY & DATA

1. Support funding for Smart Cities plans and initiatives to reduce GHG impacts and VMT and deploy systems that allow for efficient water and energy usage and safer roadways and highways.
2. Secure funding to support coordination among state agencies, MPOs, and other governmental entities to collect and share data that reflects emerging technologies, mobility choices, land use collaboration, and regional conservation opportunities.
3. Building upon SCAG's work to accelerate the electrification of the vehicle fleet, support efforts that provide funding for electric and alternative fuel vehicle planning, permit streamlining, purchases, and charging/refueling infrastructure, with a focus on public investment in areas that would otherwise be neglected, such as multi-unit dwellings, rural areas, and low to middle-income neighborhoods.
4. Support increased resources for zero-emission and alternative vehicle charging/fueling infrastructure programs, especially for private vehicles and public transit fleets.