

### **State and Federal Agencies Approve 2012-2035 RTP/SCS**

On June 4, 2012, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration (FHWA/FTA) determined, in consultation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), that the conformity analysis submitted by SCAG for the 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) and the associated 2011 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) Consistency Amendment meets all conformity requirements of the EPA's Transportation Conformity Rule and the United States Department of Transportation's Metropolitan Planning Rule. In effect for four years, the FHWA/FTA conformity determination will allow transportation projects in the SCAG region to continue to receive federal funding and approval towards implementation.

Also on June 4, the Executive Officer of the California Air Resources Board (ARB) issued an Executive Order accepting SCAG's quantification of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS and SCAG's determination that the RTP/SCS will, if implemented, achieve the 2020 and 2035 (GHG) emission reduction targets established by the ARB. The ARB determination, pursuant to the California Government Code, enables eligible residential/mixed-use projects and transit priority projects in the SCAG region to receive streamlined CEQA review as provided by SB 375.

The FHWA/FTA and ARB actions conclude all required approval for the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS. This positive outcome represents the culmination of more than two years of work involving a multitude of public agencies, including the transportation and air quality agencies throughout the region, 191 cities, hundreds of local, county, regional and state officials and staff, the business community, environmental groups, as well as various nonprofit organizations.

### **SCAG Organizational Changes**

The success of the 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy not only raised the profile of the organization, but also the expectations. Under your leadership, SCAG has increased collaboration with its members, stakeholders and partners. As we move forward, the partnerships you have created will be expecting a high level of collaboration as the region moves towards implementing the policies and strategies you adopted in the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS. To meet these needs, best serve the mission of SCAG and implement your priorities for the next fiscal year, I will be implementing the following organization changes effective July 1, 2012. Sharon Neely will be appointed Chief Deputy Executive Director. In her new role, Ms. Neely will be responsible for all day-to-day operations of the organization. To directly support the Regional Council, a General Counsel position will be created on a part time basis (20 hours per month) allowing Joann Africa to focus on the internal legal needs of the organization. Wayne Moore, CFO, will be retiring at the end of the year. To ensure a smooth transition, Basil Panas will be appointed as acting CFO. The remainder of the organizational changes are in the Planning Group. To align the functions of the planning departments more closely with the adopted goals of the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS and priorities of the next fiscal year, I will be redefining the departments within the Planning Group. I expect to finalize these assignments shortly and implement July 1, 2012. The organizational update on page 4 reflects the above discussion.

### **High-Speed Rail Update**

Following an extensive international search, the California High-Speed Rail Authority Board of Directors announced the hiring of Jeff Morales as the Authority's new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Jeff Morales is an excellent choice by the Board to take the helm at this pivotal time and capitalize on the positive momentum that has built up over the last several months. As prior Caltrans Director, Jeff most recently has been working with Southern California agencies on the HSR MOU and the revised HSR Business Plan as consultant support to the project and brought experience and good collaborative skills to the HSR CEO meetings. His extensive experience in large and complex transportation issues and projects on the local, state, federal and international levels, and a solid track record of creativity and innovation in the delivery of on-time, on-budget infrastructure projects will bring added credibility to the HSRA.

Further work by staff to develop the prioritized project list for submittal to the HSRA by June continues on the Southern California High-Speed Rail Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Per the MOU, all participating agencies must execute the MOU by June and the signatories shall submit a prioritized project list to the HSRA by June. It is anticipated the CEOs will meet June 15th to finalize the regional prioritized project list that will bring speed and service improvements to Southern California commuter rail services. We would hope that OCTA, who is the only outstanding agency to not execute the MOU, will do so by the end of the month.

## **SCAG Awarded \$1 million from the SGC Sustainable Communities Grant**

On May 10, 2012, the Board of Strategic Growth Council (SGC) took action on the 2012 Sustainable Communities Planning Grant, which included \$1 million for SCAG to undertake initiatives to assist in the implementation of the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS. These initiatives include: 1) providing General Plan Update (technical and financial) assistance to local jurisdictions to support the SCS implementation; 2) developing an SCS Implementation Guidebook and best practices resources to assist local jurisdictions; and 3) developing performance monitoring tools and report for local jurisdictions to assess progress in SCS implementation. SCAG appreciates the many local jurisdictions and other partners providing support letters for the grant application.

## **Program Environmental Impact Report**

May 8, 2012 was the deadline to file a lawsuit challenging SCAG's Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff is pleased to report to you that no lawsuits have been filed against SCAG during the 30-day statute of limitations period in Los Angeles, Orange, Imperial, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, or Sacramento county courts (in counties where SCAG filed notices of determination for the PEIR).

## **Legal Update**

On May 23, 2012, the Executive/Administration Committee authorized staff to file a joint motion to intervene in a case entitled *Communities for a Better Environment, et al. v. U.S. EPA* (Case No. 12-71340) brought by environmental groups challenging the EPA's approval of the 8-hour ozone State Implementation Plan for the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The joint intervention motion was filed by SCAQMD and SCAG on May 30, 2012 and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals accepted the intervention on May 31, 2012. The case impacts SCAG in that petitioners argues that the 8-hour ozone SIP does not contain enforceable measures, and consequently, EPA should have required SCAQMD and the California Air Resources Board to adopt additional measures needed for attainment, either as Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) to reduce motor vehicle emissions, or as controls on other sources so that total emissions reductions provide for attainment. This reference to TCMs affects SCAG and, absent extreme measures, TCMs provide relatively low emission reductions.

## **Senate Approves SB 1225**

On May 30, 2012 the state Senate unanimously passed SB 1225 (Padilla), which authorizes Caltrans to enter into an interagency transfer agreement with respect to the 351 mile long – San Diego – Los Angeles -San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) intercity passenger rail corridor, allowing local control of Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner in the corridor. The Regional Council at its May 3, 2012 meeting acted to join its partner agencies, including the LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency, Metro, OCTA, SBCOG, and VCTC, to formally support the bill.

Both passenger and freight rail operate in the corridor. Passenger service is currently provided by the Coaster (North County Transit District), Metrolink, and Amtrak and is the second busiest rail passenger corridor in the nation. The member agencies have reached a consensus on the importance of locally governed management which will enhance the success of the Pacific Surfliner service, improve the customer experience, and create synergy among all the transportation providers in the region. SCAG will continue to actively work with partner agencies to secure passage of the bill in the Assembly.

## **Pacific Electric Right-of-Way (PE ROW)/West Santa Ana Branch Corridor Alternatives Analysis**

SCAG concluded its final round of community "open house" meetings in May, where the public was provided with information on the technical evaluation results for the final set of alternatives. The final set includes the No Build, Transportation Systems Management (TSM), Bus Rapid Transit, Street Car, Light Rail, and Low Speed Maglev alternatives. The input received at the community meetings will be summarized and presented to the study's Technical Advisory Committee and Steering Committee. The study will conclude in June, when the Steering Committee will identify recommendations for a preferred alternative or alternatives. These recommendations will be brought forward to SCAG's Transportation Committee and Regional Council, and then forwarded to Metro and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) for consideration. As the owners of the right-of-way, Metro and OCTA have the option to proceed into the environmental and engineering phases of project development. For more information on the community meetings and the evaluation results, please visit [www.pacificelectriccorridor.com](http://www.pacificelectriccorridor.com).

## **24th Annual Demographic Workshop**

On May 21, 2012, leading experts and public officials met to discuss the implications of two emerging trends in Southern California's communities: while older populations are retiring in increasing numbers, fewer children are being born.

Organized by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy, the 24th Annual Demographics Workshop, "Generation Revolution in Southern California: Planning Implications of Fewer Children and Many More Elderly" provided over 100 local planners and stakeholders with new data and analysis for the region's population in the coming decades.

A highlight of the event included a presentation from SCAG's Immediate Past President Pam O'Connor on the panel entitled "Growth & Change – How Should the Region Respond". Former SCAG President Larry McCallon, Mayor, City of Highland, was also able to participate at the workshop.

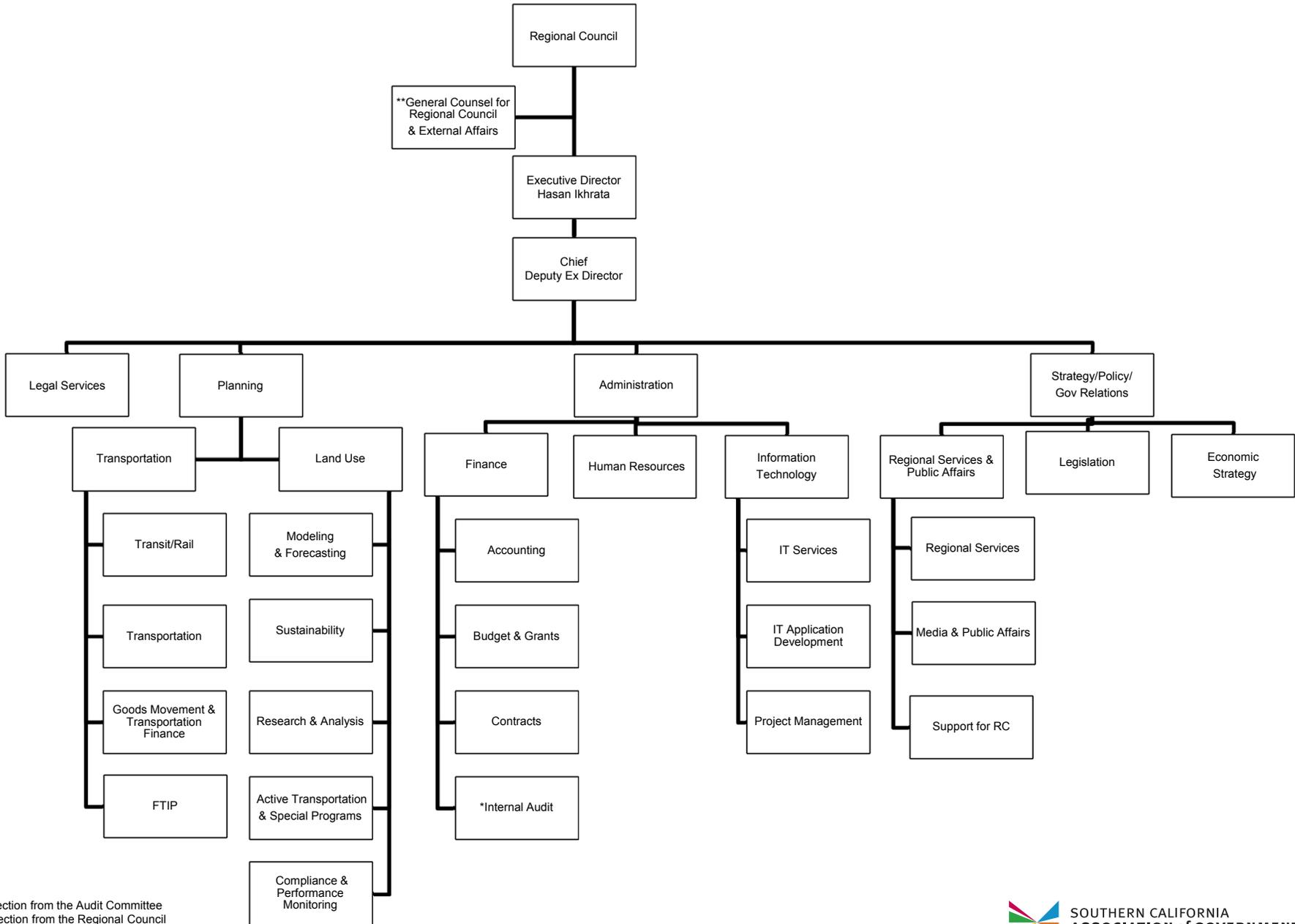
## **Toolbox Tuesday May Workshop**

In May, SCAG's Compass Blueprint Toolbox Tuesdays Series featured presentations on the Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Element Updates. Speakers included SCAG staff, a representative from the state's Department of Housing and Community Development, and consultants with extensive experience in housing issues in Southern California. Participants were advised on important legislative changes that affect provisions in Housing Element law and how best to approach the update process, including key technical resources and tools, tips on hiring consultants, and addressing budget constraints. All Toolbox Tuesdays sessions will continue to be available via videoconference at SCAG regional partner offices in Palm Desert, El Centro, Orange, Palmdale, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura. On June 26, 2012 the Toolbox Tuesdays session will cover bicycle and pedestrian planning and provide information on the Safe Routes to School grant program.

## **SCAG's 2012-2013 Overall Work Program**

On June 1, 2012, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) notified the United States' Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that SCAG's 2012-2013 Overall Work Program (OWP) was recommended for approval. FHWA and FTA must approve the OWP by June 30, 2012. As we have worked closely with our funding partners throughout the development of the OWP, I do anticipate approval and will keep you informed of the status.

# SCAG Organization Chart – 7-1-12



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\* Takes direction from the Audit Committee  
 \*\* Takes direction from the Regional Council