

SCAG Benchmarks Task Force

The Benchmarks Task Force, which consists of elected officials and issue expert representatives in the region, has been providing guidance to staff in preparing the annual State of the Region report. Current Task Force members include the following:

- Hon. Ronald O. Loveridge, City of Riverside (Chair)
- Hon. Debbie Cook, City of Huntington Beach, (Vice-Chair)
- Hon. Mona Field, Los Angeles Community College District
- Hon. Larry McCallon, City of Highland
- Hon. Chris Norby, County of Orange
- Hon. Paul M. Nowatka, City of Torrance
- Hon. Pam O'Connor, City of Santa Monica
- Rick Bishop, Western Riverside Council of Governments
- Kimberly Collins, San Diego State University
- Barry Engelberg, Orange County Transportation Authority
- Fernando Guerra, Loyola Marymount University
- Lamont "Monty" Hempel, University of Redlands
- Dean Kubani, City of Santa Monica Environmental & Public Works
- Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, University of California, Los Angeles
- Jerilyn Lopez Mendoza, Environmental Defense
- Dowell Myers, University of Southern California
- Todd Priest, Building Industry Association of Southern California
- Anil Puri, California State University, Fullerton
- Ty Schuiling, San Bernardino Associated Governments
- Arthur J. Shaw, Consulting Economist
- Arnold Sherwood, University of California, Berkeley
- Jim Stewart, Southern California Council on Environment and Development
- Goetz Wolff, Center for Regional Employment Strategies and UCLA

Report Preparation, Dissemination and Utilization

1. With guidance from the Benchmarks Task Force, SCAG staff collects and analyzes information regarding the performance of the region. Regional performance is assessed with respect to issues including demography, the economy, housing, transportation, the environment, education and public safety. In addition, staff invites issue experts to prepare guest essays as part of the report addressing regional issues with policy recommendations. Finally, based on information collected by staff, the Benchmarks Task Force develops an annual Report Card for the region.
2. An annual State of the Region Report and Report Card is released at the end of each year through a press conference. The press conference for the State of the Region has received very prominent media coverage throughout Southern California. For example, in each of the last three years, media coverage of the State of the Region included more than 25 newspapers, 6 TV stations and 6 radio stations.

SCAG Benchmarks Task Force

3. The annual State of the Region Report and Report Card have been mailed to many interested parties, including, for example:
 - SCAG Regional Council and Policy Committee members including more than 100 local elected officials;
 - Chief County and City Administrators of the 193 local governments in the region;
 - Local government planning directors;
 - Members of the state and congressional delegations; and
 - Regional public libraries.
4. Each year, the new State of the Region Report and Report Card is posted on the SCAG web site www.scag.ca.gov concurrent with the press conference and has been downloaded more than 75,000 times in 2007.
5. In addition to the extensive media coverage, SCAG staff has also been making presentation in response to the on-going invitations from numerous organizations regarding the State of the Region. Examples of these organizations include City Councils, Mayor's Council of Economic Advisers, Chamber of Commerce, non-profit planning collaborative, City Planning Department, Council of Governments and federal agencies.
6. The State of the Region information has been used in planning textbooks or courses. For example, it has been used as course materials in universities such as UCLA, UC Riverside and University of Southern California.
7. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), in its report to the U.S. Congress titled "Informing Our Nation: Improving How to Understand and Assess the USA's Position and Progress" (November 2004), identified SCAG's State of the Region as one of the few regional indicator initiatives containing a comprehensive indicator system.
8. The State of the Region 2006 has received the 2006 PRISM Award and the 2007 Communicator Award for its impacts on community awareness.