



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
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MEETING OF THE

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

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

**Thursday, June 5, 2025
10:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

To Attend In-Person:

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

To Watch or View Only:

<https://scag.ca.gov/scag-tv-livestream>

To Attend and Participate on Your Computer:

<https://scag.zoom.us/j/81703196837>

To Attend and Participate by Phone:

**Call-in Number: 1-669-900-6833
Meeting ID: 817 0319 6837**

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: www.scag.ca.gov/committees.

SCAG, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), will accommodate persons who require a modification of accommodation to participate in this meeting. SCAG is also committed to helping people with limited proficiency in the English language access the agency's essential public information and services. You can request such assistance by calling (213) 630-1410. We request at least 72 hours (three days) notice to provide reasonable accommodations and will make every effort to arrange for assistance as soon as possible.



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 A Meeting Room on the 17th floor starting at 10:00 a.m.

To Attend by Computer: Click the following link: <https://scag.zoom.us/j/81703196837>. 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:** 817 0319 6837, 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 Wednesday, June 4, 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 Wednesday, June 4, 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.



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA

TELECONFERENCE AVAILABLE AT THESE ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS*

<p>Ana Beltran America's Best Value Inn Lobby 351 W. Main Street Westmorland, CA 92281</p>	<p>Art Bishop Town of Apple Valley - Town Hall 14955 Dale Evans Pkwy Conference Room A Apple Valley, CA 92307</p>	<p>Robert D. Copeland Signal Hill Public Library Learning Center 1800 E. Hill Street Signal Hill, CA 90755</p>
<p>Ned E. Davis City of Westlake Village - City Hall 31200 Oak Crest Drive Westlake Village, CA 91361</p>	<p>Carmen Hernandez City of Barstow - City Hall 220 E. Mountain View Barstow, CA 92311</p>	<p>Shari L. Horne City of Laguna Woods - City Hall 24264 El Toro Road Laguna Woods, CA 92637</p>
<p>Britt Huff City of Rolling Hills Estates - City Hall 4045 Palos Verdes Drive North Rolling Hills Estates CA, 90274</p>	<p>Brian Johsz City of Chino Hills - City Hall 14000 City Center Drive Chino Hills, CA 91709</p>	<p>Steven Leash 820 West 7th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska, USA, 99501</p>
<p>Elaine Litster City of Simi Valley - City Hall 2929 Tapo Canyon Road Simi Valley, CA 93063</p>	<p>Yasmine-Imani McMorrin City of Culver City - Culver City 9770 Culver Boulevard Armstrong Room, 1st Floor Culver City, CA 90232</p>	<p>Patty Senecal City of Seal Beach - City Hall 211 8th Street Seal Beach, CA 90740</p>
<p>Jennifer Stark City of Claremont - City Hall 207 Harvard Avenue 2nd Floor, Citrus Room Claremont, CA 91711</p>	<p>Ali Taj 11856 187th Street Artesia, CA 90701</p>	<p>Tamala Takahashi City of Burbank - City Hall 275 East Olive Avenue 2nd Floor, Council Office Burbank, CA 91502</p>
<p>Connor Traut 7661 Silver Street Buena Park, CA 90620</p>	<p>Stephanie Virgen City of Coachella - City Hall 1515 Sixth Street Coachella, CA 92236</p>	<p>Dale Welty City of Canyon Lake - City Hall 31526 Railroad Canyon Road City Antechamber Canyon Lake, CA 92584</p>

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



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA

EEC - Energy and Environment Committee *Members – June 2025*

1. **Hon. Rick Denison**
EEC Chair, Yucca Valley, RC District 11
2. **Hon. Daniel Ramos**
EEC Vice Chair, Adelanto, RC District 65
3. **Hon. Ana Beltran**
Westmorland, ICTC
4. **Hon. Arthur Bishop**
Apple Valley, SBCTA
5. **Hon. Margaret Clark**
Rosemead, RC District 32
6. **Hon. Robert Copeland**
Signal Hill, GCCOG
7. **Hon. Jenny Crosswhite**
Santa Paula, RC District 47
8. **Hon. Ned Davis**
Westlake Village, LVMCOG
9. **Hon. Jesus Escobar**
Imperial County
10. **Hon. Carmen Hernandez**
Barstow, SBCTA
11. **Hon. Shari Horne**
Laguna Woods, OCCOG
12. **Hon. Britt Huff**
Rolling Hills Estates, SBCCOG
13. **Hon. Brian Johsz**
Chino Hills, SBCTA
14. **Hon. Joe Kalmick**
Seal Beach, RC District 20
15. **Hon. Steven Leash**
Cahuilla Band of Indians
16. **Hon. Elaine Litster**
Simi Valley, VCOG



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA

- 17. Hon. Patricia Lock Dawson**
Riverside, RC District 68
- 18. Sup. Vianey Lopez**
Ventura County
- 19. Hon. Yasmine-Imani McMorris**
Culver City, WCCOG
- 20. Hon. Cory Moss**
Industry, Pres. Appt. (Member at Large)
- 21. Hon. Jeannette Sanchez-Palacios**
Ventura, VCOG
- 22. Hon. Suely Saro**
Long Beach, RC District 29
- 23. Hon. Patty Senecal**
Seal Beach, OCCOG
- 24. Hon. Jennifer Stark**
Claremont, SGVCOG
- 25. Hon. Ali Taj**
Artesia, GCCOG
- 26. Hon. Tamala Takahashi**
Burbank, SFVCOG
- 27. Hon. Connor Traut**
Buena Park, OCCOG
- 28. Hon. Stephanie Virgen**
Coachella, CVAG
- 29. Hon. Dale Welty**
Canyon Lake, WRCOG



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA

Southern California Association of Governments
900 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1700 - Policy A Meeting Room
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Thursday, June 5, 2025
10:00 AM

The Energy and Environment Committee may consider and act upon any of the items on the agenda regardless of whether they are listed as Information or Action items.

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(The Honorable Rick Denison, 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

CONSENT CALENDAR

Approval Items

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. Minutes of the Meeting – April 3, 2025 | PG 7 |
|---|------|

Receive and File

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 2. Energy and Environment Committee Outlook and Future Agenda Items | PG 14 |
|---|-------|

INFORMATION ITEMS

- | | | |
|--|----------|-------|
| 3. Connect SoCal 2024: Implementation Strategies Update
<i>(Leslie Cayton, Associate Regional Planner, SCAG)</i> | 10 mins. | PG 18 |
| 4. Connect SoCal 2024: Sustainable Communities Strategy Acceptance and Target Updates
<i>(Camille Guiriba, Senior Regional Planner, SCAG)</i> | 15 mins. | PG 43 |
| 5. Water Action Resolution White Paper
<i>(Kim Clark, Planning Supervisor, SCAG)</i> | 60 mins. | PG 46 |

CHAIR’S REPORT

(The Honorable Rick Denison, Chair)

STAFF REPORT

(Rachel Wagner, Government Affairs Officer, SCAG)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025

THE FOLLOWING MINUTES ARE A SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE (EEC). A DIGITAL RECORDING OF THE ACTUAL MEETING IS AVAILABLE AT: <http://scag.iqm2.com/Citizens/>.

The Energy and Environment Committee (EEC) of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) held its regular meeting both in person and virtually (telephonically and electronically). A quorum was present.

Members Present

Hon. Jenny Crosswhite (Chair)	<i>Santa Paula</i>	District 47
Hon. Lauren Meister (Vice Chair)	<i>West Hollywood</i>	District 41
Hon. Ana Beltran	<i>Westmoreland</i>	ICTC
Hon. Art Bishop	<i>Town of Apple Valley</i>	SBCTA
Hon. Margaret Clark	<i>Rosemead</i>	SGVCOG
Hon. Ned Davis	<i>Westlake Village</i>	LVMCOG
Hon. Rick Denison	<i>Yucca Valley</i>	District 11
Hon. Jesus Escobar		Imperial County
Hon. Carmen Hernandez	<i>Barstow</i>	SBCTA
Hon. Shari Horne	<i>Laguna Woods</i>	OCCOG
Hon. Britt Huff	<i>Rolling Hills Estates</i>	SBCCOG
Hon. Brian Johsz	<i>Chino Hills</i>	SBCTA
Hon. Joe Kalmick	<i>Seal Beach</i>	District 20
Hon. Elaine Litster	<i>Simi Valley</i>	VCOG
Hon. Patricia Lock Dawson	<i>Riverside</i>	District 68
Hon. Vianey Lopez		Ventura County
Hon. Yasmine-Imani McMorrin	<i>Culver City</i>	WCCOG
Hon. Daniel Ramos	<i>Adelanto</i>	SBCTA
Hon. Suely Saro	<i>Long Beach</i>	District 29
Hon. Patty Senecal	<i>Seal Beach</i>	OCCOG
Hon. Connor Traut	<i>Buena Park</i>	OCCOG
Hon. Stephanie Virgen	<i>Coachella</i>	CVAG
Hon. Dale Welty	<i>Canyon Lake</i>	WRCOG



Members Not Present

Hon. Robert Copeland	<i>Signal Hill</i>	GCCOG
Hon. Steven Leash	<i>Cahuilla Band of Indians</i>	
Hon. Cory Moss	<i>City of Industry</i>	Pres. Appt
Hon. Jose Sanchez	<i>Los Angeles County</i>	COC
Hon. Jeannette Sanchez-Palacios	<i>Ventura</i>	VCOG
Hon. Jennifer Stark	<i>Claremont</i>	SGVCOG
Hon. Ali Taj	<i>Artesia</i>	Pres. Appt
Hon. Tamala Takahashi	<i>Burbank</i>	SFVCOG

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Crosswhite called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. and Vice Chair Lauren Meister, West Hollywood, District 41, led the Pledge of Allegiance. Staff confirmed a quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chair Crosswhite opened the public comment period and noted that this was the time for members of the public to offer comment on matters that are within SCAG’s jurisdiction but are not listed on the agenda.

Chair Crosswhite asked if any comments were received after the deadline. SCAG staff acknowledged there were no public comments received after the 5:00 p.m. deadline on April 2, 2025.

Seeing no public comment, Chair Crosswhite closed the public comment period for matters not listed on the agenda.

REVIEW AND PRIORITIZE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no requests to prioritize agenda items.

ACTION ITEM

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Chair Crosswhite asked Legal Counsel to announce the nominations that had been received by March 26, and also asked him to walk them through the process.

Chief Counsel Jeffery Elder stated one nomination had been received for Chair, Rick Denison, Yucca-Valley. He stated that in addition to nominees received before the meeting, SCAG’s rules allowed

for nominations from the floor. He then described the process for nominations from the floor and the election.

Chair Crosswhite stated the floor was open for nominations for Chair. Seeing no nominations from the floor, Chair Crosswhite closed the nomination period.

A MOTION to select Rick Denison as Chair of Energy and Environment Committee passed by the following votes:

AYES: Beltran, Bishop, Clark, Crosswhite, Davis, Denison, Hernandez, Horne, Huff, Johsz, Kalmick, Litster, Lock Dawson, Lopez, Meister, McMorrin, Ramos, Saro, Senecal, Traut, Virgen and Welty (22)

NOES: None (0)

ABSTAIN: None (0)

Chair Crosswhite thanked everyone for their support.

Chair Crosswhite once again asked Legal Counsel to announce the nominations that had been received by March 26 for Vice Chair, and to walk them through the process.

Chief Counsel Elder stated one nomination had been received for Vice Chair, for Daniel Ramos, City of Adelanto. He stated that in addition to the nominees received before the meeting, SCAG's rules allowed for nominations from the floor. He then described the process for nominations from the floor and the election.

Chair Crosswhite stated the floor was open for nominations for Vice Chair. Seeing no nominations from the floor, Chair Crosswhite closed the nomination period.

A MOTION to select Daniel Ramos as Vice Chair of Energy and Environment Committee passed by the following votes:

AYES: Beltran, Bishop, Clark, Crosswhite, Davis, Denison, Hernandez, Horne, Huff, Johsz, Kalmick, Litster, Lock Dawson, Lopez, Meister, McMorrin, Ramos, Saro, Senecal, Traut, Virgen and Welty (22)

NOES: None (0)

ABSTAIN: None (0)

CONSENT CALENDARApproval Items

2. Minutes of the Meeting – March 6, 2025

Receive and File

3. Energy and Environment Committee Outlook and Future Agenda Items

A MOTION was made (Kalmick) to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion was SECONDED (Ramos) and passed by the following votes:

AYES: Beltran, Bishop, Clark, Crosswhite, Davis, Denison, Hernandez, Horne, Huff, Johsz, Kalmick, Litster, Lock Dawson, Lopez, Meister, McMorrin, Ramos, Saro, Senecal, Traut, Virgen and Welty (22)

NOES: None (0)

ABSTAIN: Escobar (1)

INFORMATION ITEMS

4. Regional Recovery and Resilience in the face of Disasters-Policy Discussion

There were no public comments on item 4.

Kim Clark, Planning Supervisor, SCAG provided an overview of the selection of general plan safety element requirements such as landslides and wildfire. She reviewed the recent laws for Climate Resilience and provided the regional performance on safety element compliance. She indicated that the city of Arcadia was a case study for safety elements and introduced Fiona Graham, Planning Services Manager, for the city.

Ms. Graham provided a brief history of the City of Arcadia. She stated that the city started the preparation of the Housing Element Update in early 2021 and had contracted with Dudek early 2022 to prepare the Safety Element and Environmental Justice Element. She reviewed current bills which required safety elements and discussed the climate hazards in Arcadia. She stated there were 12 new safety element policy goals on earthquake preparedness and evacuation route planning, developments in flood areas, reducing the impacts of wildfire, and effective emergency and disaster response preparedness. She indicated that new policies were a joint effort between Development Services and Fire Departments. She stated that the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan was adopted on

May 11, 2022, and formally adopted by the City Council February 18, 2025. Lastly, she discussed the implementation plan.

The comprehensive staff report was included in the agenda packet and posted on the SCAG website. The meeting video is also available on the SCAG website.

5. South Coast AQMD Proposed Heater and Water Heater Rules

There were 6 public comments received; Theresa Lee, Rita Loof, Deborah Cam, Dave-resident of Rancho Cucamonga and Jessica Martinez expressed concern over various issues concerning water heaters and Pete Marsh expressed support over regulations on fossil fuel emissions.

Heather Farr, Planning and Rules Manager, South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), stated that SCAQMD was the government agency responsible for air quality in the greater Southern California region and was obligated under federal law to meet health-based air quality standards. She reviewed the 2022 Air Quality Management Plan and regulation of space and water heating. She discussed the proposed amended rules 1111 and 1121 which applied to gas-fired furnaces and water heaters in primarily residences. She stated that in February 2025, staff revised the original rule proposal and proposed a new rule concept which would replace other alternative options with manufacturer sales target for zero-emission and NOx-emitting appliances. She discussed the manufacturer compliance targets and proposed mitigation fee. She indicated that SCAQMD would offer a pilot incentive program called Go Zero. Some of what the program would include were heat pump rebates for space and water heating and \$21 million funding for the pilot phase. Lastly, she stated there would be a public hearing on May 2, 2025 and the pilot program would launch in Spring 2025.

The comprehensive staff report was included in the agenda packet and posted on the SCAG website. The meeting video is also available on the SCAG website.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Crosswhite stated that members of SCAG's Legislative/Communications, and Membership Committee travelled to Sacramento, where they met with key elected officials and staff to advocate for the region's priorities. She indicated that they met with the Insurance Commissioner to discuss fire insurance and spoke with legislators about climate resilience districts.

She welcomed the incoming Chair and Vice Chair and thanked Vice Chair Meister for her contributions to the committee.

STAFF REPORT



Rachel Wagner, Government Affairs Officer, announced that SCAG was looking forward to seeing the members at the General Assembly and staff would reach out to those cities who had not sent information on their designated voting delegate.

ANNOUNCEMENT

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Crosswhite adjourned the Energy and Environment Committee meeting at 11:51 a.m.

[MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE EEC]

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ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE REPORT

2024-2025

MEMBERS	Representing	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	Jun	Total Mtgs Attended To Date
Beltran, Ana	Westmoreland, ICTC	0			0		0	1			1	1			3
Bishop, Art	Apple Valley, SBCTA	1			1		1	0			1	1			5
Clark, Margaret	Rosemead, RC District 32	1			1		1	1			1	1			6
Copeland, Robert	Signal Hill, GCCOG	1			0		1	0			1	0			3
Crosswhite, Jenny	Santa Paula, RC District 47	1			1		1	1			1	1			6
Davis, Ned	Westlake Village, LVMCOG	1			0		0	1			1	1			4
Denison, Rick	Yucca Valley, RC District 11	1			1		1	1			1	1			6
Esobar, Jesus	Imperial County			D						D	1	1			2
Hernandez, Carmen	Barstow, SBCTA	1		A	1		1	1		A	1	1			6
Horne, Shari	Laguna Woods, OCCOG	1		R	1		1	1		R	1	1			6
Huff, Britt	Rolling Hills Estates, SCBCOG	1		K	1		1	1		K	0	1			5
Johsz, Brian	Chino Hills, SBCTA										1	1			2
Kalmick, Joe	Seal Beach, RC District 20	1			1		1	1			1	1			6
Leash, Steven	Cahuilla Band of Indians	1			1		0	0			0	0			2
Litster, Elaine	Simi Valley, VCOG	0			1		1	1			1	1			5
Lock Dawson, Patricia	Riverside, District 68				1		1	1			0	1			4
Lopez, Vianey	Ventura County	1			1		1	1			1	1			6
Meister, Lauren	West Hollywood, RC District 41	1			1		1	1			1	1			6
McMorrin, Yasmine-Imani	Culver City, WCCOG										1	1			2
Moss, Cory	City of Industry, Pres. Apt						0	0			0	0			0
Ramos, Daniel	Adelanto, SBCTA	1			1		1	1			1	1			6
Sanchez, Jose	Los Angeles County, COC	0			0		0	0			0	0			0
Sanchez-Palacios, Jeanette	Ventura, VCOG	0			0		0	1			1	0			2
Saro, Suely	Long Beach, RC District 29										1	1			2
Senecal, Patty	Seal Beach, OCCOG										1	1			2
Stark, Jennifer	Claremont, SGVCOG	1			1		0	1			0	0			3
Taj, Ali	Artesia, Pres. Apt	1			0		0	0			0	0			1
Takahashi, Tamala	Burbank, SFVCOG	1			1		0	1			1	0			4
Traut, Connor	Buena Park, OCCOG	1			1		0	1			0	1			4
Virgen, Stephanie	Coachella, CVAG	1			1		0	1			1	1			5
Welty, Dale	Canyon Lake, WRCOG	1			1		1	1			0	1			5



AGENDA ITEM 2

REPORT

Southern California Association of Governments
June 5, 2025

To: Energy and Environment Committee (EEC)
From: Ryan Wolfe, Manager for Sustainable and Resilient Development
213-630-1527, wolfe@scag.ca.gov

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S
APPROVAL**

Subject: Energy and Environment Committee Outlook and Future Agenda

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive and File

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This item supports the following Strategic Priority 1: Establish and implement a regional vision for a sustainable future. 2: Be a cohesive and influential voice for the region. 3: Spur innovation and action through leadership in research, analysis and information sharing. 5: Secure and optimize diverse funding sources to support regional priorities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In April 2024, SCAG’s Regional Council adopted the 2024-2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, Connect SoCal 2024. Following adoption of Connect SoCal 2024, staff developed a 12-month EEC Outlook to carry forward the policy priorities and Implementation Strategies of Connect SoCal 2024. For FY2025, the EEC Outlook reflects outcomes of the 2024 Executive Administration Committee (EAC) Retreat and discussions with the EEC Chair and Vice Chair. The Committee Outlook and Future Agenda Items will be updated monthly as a receive and file item.

BACKGROUND:

The work of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the leadership from the agency’s Policy Committees and Regional Council is driven by SCAG’s legally mandated duties as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Southern California, the long-range Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), Connect SoCal 2024 as well as, the agency Strategic Plan approved by the Executive Administrative Committee on May 1, 2024.

Energy and Environment Committee Outlook and Framework

The Policy Committees help to further the implementation of Connect SoCal by advising on policy, research or resource programs. The Policy Committees will also be informed and advise on broader

regional leadership items as needed. Over the upcoming year, most agenda items fall under the following three categories:

1. **Connect SoCal:** Connect SoCal 2024, the 2024-2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy was approved on April 4, 2024. These agenda items will be focused on implementation of the investments and strategies included in the plan, as well as amendments as needed.
2. **Local Resources:** This refers to programs administered by SCAG such as the Sustainable Communities Program, the Regional Early Action Program, or Go Human. Action and information items may relate to guideline development or program awards. These agenda items may also include updates of grants, data or tools available to local jurisdictions.
3. **Regional Leadership:** These agenda items relate to issues or policy areas of regional significance and may include updates and presentations from external speakers.

The topics and panels covered may change based on speaker availability, progress on the targeted programs, and other requests from the Committee Chair and Vice Chair as well as members. To request future agenda items, Policy Committee members may request that the agenda item be pulled for discussion, or they may send a request directly to the Chair or committee staff for consideration and reporting out at the next meeting. Agenda items that are recommended by Policy Committee members will be discussed with the Chair and Vice Chair to assess relevance to the EEC and the considerations noted above.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Work associated with this item is included in the FY25 Indirect Cost Program (810.0120.20: Planning Policy Development).

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. EEC Agenda Outlook - June

Energy & Environment Committee Agenda Outlook for FY25

Date	Connect SoCal	Local Resources	Regional Leadership
Sep.- Dec.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 FTIP and Connect SoCal Amendment 1, Associated Transportation Conformity (proposed final) • Connect SoCal: Implementation Strategies Progress Report • TENT Resolution No. 24-XXX Approving Connect SoCal 2024 CEQA Addendum No. 1 to Program Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse No. 2022100337) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 Sustainable Communities Program Guidelines • Inflation Reduction Act Adaptation/Resilience Funding • Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program Update • State Adaptation/Resilience Funding • Groundwater Recharge Panel: Outside Presenters • Pathways to Deep Decarbonization • Regional Resilience Framework Overview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micro-grids and Resilience • SB-375 Target Update Recommendation • SB-375 Joint MPO Letter • Electric Grid Readiness <i>replaced Micro-grids and Resilience</i>

❖ = **Emerging Technology Item**

Anticipated major actions and information items. Does not include all Receive/File and Program Updates.

Energy & Environment Committee Agenda Outlook for FY25

Date	Connect SoCal	Local Resources	Regional Leadership
Feb.- March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Policy Committee: Wildfires (Feb) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Resilience Districts 	
April- June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect SoCal Implementation Strategies Update • Connect SoCal 2024: Sustainable Communities Strategy Acceptance and Target Updates • <i>SALC Study Update to be rescheduled</i> • <i>Infrastructure Planning for Climate Vulnerability to be rescheduled</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Plan Safety Element Benefits and Incentives added • South Coast AQMD Proposed Heater and Water Heater Rules • Water White Paper Phase I • <i>Climate Ready Home Hardening moved to CEHD</i> • <i>30x30: The Role of Parks to be rescheduled</i> ❖ <i>Smart Cities: Electric Vehicle Incentives Program Draft Guidelines to be rescheduled</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Carbon Sequestration – Natural and Farm lands: Outside Presenter to be rescheduled</i>

❖ = **Emerging Technology Item**

Anticipated major actions and information items. Does not include all Receive/File and Program Updates.



AGENDA ITEM 3

REPORT

Southern California Association of Governments
June 5, 2025

To: Community Economic & Human Development Committee (CEHD)
Transportation Committee (TC)

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S
APPROVAL**

Energy and Environment Committee (EEC)

From: Annaleigh Ekman, Associate Regional Planner
(213) 630-1427, ekman@scag.ca.gov

Subject: Connect SoCal 2024: Implementation Strategies Update

RECOMMENDED ACTION FOR EEC:

Information Only – No Action Required

RECOMMENDED ACTION FOR CEHD AND TC:

Receive and File

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This item supports the following Strategic Priority 1: Establish and implement a regional vision for a sustainable future.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In April 2024, the Regional Council adopted Connect SoCal 2024, SCAG’s Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). Connect SoCal 2024 included Implementation Strategies which identify ways SCAG will Lead, Partner, or Support other responsible parties. This report summarizes the progress to date of these implementation activities for which methods vary from collaborative policy leadership, research, or resource roles.

BACKGROUND:

As required by federal and state law, SCAG prepares a long-range Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) every four years which provides a vision for integrating land use and transportation for increased mobility and more sustainable development. The Regional Council adopted the latest RTP/SCS, Connect SoCal 2024, one year ago in April 2024. SCAG led an extensive planning and visioning process in developing Connect SoCal 2024, including meetings with 164 jurisdictions in the region to review their growth forecasts, an extensive public outreach process, and policy discussions with elected leaders from around the region. The plan identifies a series of outcomes including increased transit ridership; an emphasis on Priority Development Areas that bring housing, jobs, and mobility options closer together; safe and efficient goods movement; and streets that prioritize people and safety. Staff provided the first Implementation Strategies Update to the Policy Committees in November 2024.

CONNECT SOCIAL 2024 IMPLEMENTATION

Direct implementation of Connect SoCal 2024 primarily relies on the actions and decisions of other transportation agencies, local jurisdictions, and actors in the private sector to operate transit service, install new bike paths, approve new land uses, or build new housing. SCAG has an increasingly significant role in implementing the plan which rests on collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders, policy leadership, our role as an information hub, through research—and, lastly, by providing resources to local agencies or jurisdictions to advance their efforts or implementation.

Regional Planning Policies: Connect SoCal 2024 includes Regional Planning Policies which provide guidance for integrating land use and transportation planning to realize the vision of Connect SoCal. The policies have been refined over several planning cycles to promote multimodal transportation investments and local development that align with the regional growth vision. The policies also incorporate recent direction from SCAG’s Regional Council, Policy Committees, and special subcommittees.

Implementation Strategies: The Implementation Strategies articulate priorities for SCAG efforts in fulfilling or going beyond the related Regional Planning Policies. These strategies represent near term efforts where SCAG will lead, partner, or support other responsible parties and are further specified as part of SCAG’s Overall Work Program development process.

Chapter 3.4 of Connect SoCal 2024 provides the complete list of Implementation Strategies. The Implementation Strategies are organized by Regional Planning Policy categories within the four Connect SoCal goal areas of Mobility, Communities, Environment, and Economy.

Since adoption of Connect SoCal 2024, SCAG has made progress on 79 of the 93 Implementation Strategies. The attached report details the 52 actions and milestones that have occurred since the last semi-annual update in November 2024. Several additional strategies have made internal progress with initial research or drafting of Scopes of Work. As those projects progress, they will be included in future Connect SoCal Implementation Strategy Progress Reports.

Generally, successful implementation of Connect SoCal 2024 relies on many actors and decision makers beyond SCAG. The attached report includes a brief list of some of the accomplishments made by local agencies in the SCAG region since last fall. Accomplishments include securing significant project funding, progress toward zero emission bus fleets, opening affordable housing developments, successful tests of zero-emission passenger trains, construction of significant infrastructure projects that meet community needs, and more.

Regional Leadership: SCAG’s role in implementing Connect SoCal 2024, detailed in many of the Implementation Strategies, is in four primary ways: collaboration and policy leadership, funding administration, research, and resources. The following highlight some of the recent significant activities and milestones completed since Connect SoCal 2024 adoption:

Collaboration and Policy Leadership

- SCAG Regional Council President Curt Hagman delivered remarks during SCAG’s “2024 Southern California Economic Update,” featuring SCAG’s annual economic reporting, presentations from SCAG’s Economic Roundtable, and in-depth discussion about the state of the economy among Regional Council members on December 5, 2024.
- SCAG’s Chief Government and Public Affairs Officer Javiera Cartagena traveled to Washington, D.C. on March 11, as part of the LA Area Chamber of Commerce’s ACCESS D.C. delegation, where she met with Rep. Julia Brownley (D-Thousand Oaks), who serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, to discuss SCAG’s priorities for the next Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill.
- SCAG Executive Director Kome Ajise moderated a panel of experts at the ITS America Events 2025 Policy Summit. The panel, “Maintaining Consumer Privacy in a Connected Ecosystem,” discussed the transportation industry’s best practices for maintaining consumer data privacy. The panel also discussed the potential for a federal data privacy framework and other ways to shape and improve consumer education practices.
- SCAG Regional Council President Hagman, Chief Operating Officer Darin Chidsey, and a delegation of SCAG Regional Council members held a mobile workshop in the city of Ontario, touring the Amazon Robotics Fulfillment Center on April 11, 2025. These mobile workshops are critical to understanding the growing and evolving transportation planning needs of the region, as well as providing an opportunity to see how the transportation planning and funding is being implemented.

Federal Funding Administration

- SCAG’s Regional Council approved the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program Guidelines on March 6, 2025, and initiated the project nomination process, which will award \$1.2 billion in federal funds to cities, counties, transit agencies, federally recognized Tribal governments, and county transportation commissions in the SCAG region.
- SCAG received FHWA approval for the final transportation conformity analyses for 2025 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) and Connect SoCal 2024 Amendment 1 in December 2024.

- SCAG’s Regional Council approved the 2025 Regional Active Transportation Program on April 3, 2025, which is funded with a combination of state and federal dollars. The program is comprised of 15 projects (totaling \$35.023 million) and 113 contingency projects (totaling \$972.2 million) that support walking, bicycling, and other forms of active transportation in the region.
- SCAG received a \$6 million grant from the U.S. DOT for the Events and Games Pedestrian Safety Program to improve pedestrian safety in Los Angeles ahead of major international events.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Research

- SCAG released numerous data and best practices resources:
 - SCAG published the “Southern California Zero Emissions Truck Infrastructure Study,” a study on the potential zero-emission charging and fueling demand across the SCAG region that includes a phased blueprint and action plan for a regional network of charging and fueling infrastructure. The study also was conducted to answer key questions about how stations in the region may operate to service different truck markets and business functions.
 - SCAG published the “Mobility Hub Design and Implementation Guide,” which provides a supportive framework for local implementation, equipping local jurisdictions and potential partners with resources to conceptualize, design, and implement mobility hubs. To support local practitioners, SCAG hosted a Mobility Hubs Toolbox Tuesday training session on March 18, 2025.
 - SCAG published the SoCal Transportation Safety Predictive Modeling Platform, a web-based traffic safety planning tool for local planners and decision-makers to analyze, model, and predict transportation system safety risks. The tool will assist local agencies reduce the number and severity of traffic collisions by employing a data-focused approach to the assessment of roadway safety performance and for targeting transportation system safety investments where they are most needed. This tool provides important decision support resource for elected officials and planners to identify emerging local safety issues so that investments and risk mitigation efforts may be strategically prioritized as part of a performance-based approach to transportation safety planning. SCAG hosted two Toolbox Tuesday training sessions (Part I and Part II) for the tool in January 2025.
- FHWA awarded SCAG a Strategic Innovation for Revenue Collection (SIRC) grant to test how a mileage-based user fee can work in tandem with existing revenue collection mechanisms, including tolling. With this grant, SCAG, in partnership with NextMove by Cintra, will test a

concept for transportation revenue collection technology to capture the full picture of drivers' transportation fees while evaluating policy parameters to holistically address inequity in transportation. This project will help determine viability of a mileage-based user fee at the regional level and uncover how a user-based mechanism can coexist with existing tolling infrastructure.

- SCAG initiated work on the “Innovative Clean Transit Regional Assessment” and issued a request for proposals in January 2025. To support SCAG’s local transit agencies in meeting CARB’s Innovative Clean Transit regulations, the study will assess the efforts of the region’s transit operators to develop and implement zero-emissions bus rollout plans and assess the readiness of the region to transition to zero-emission transit fleets. With the transition to zero-emission bus fleets by 2040, the region stands to benefit from improved air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- SCAG initiated work with a consultant on the “Natural & Agricultural Lands Economic and Resilience Benefits Study,” which will consist of a white paper and resource appendix on the ecosystem services, resilience benefits, and economic benefits of natural and agricultural lands in the SCAG region.

Local Technical Assistance Resources

- SCAG Regional Council approved funding for 13 projects through the 2024 Sustainable Communities Program Active Transportation and Safety call for projects, awarding a total of \$8.1 million. Projects include community plans, areawide plans, and quick-build projects that encourage active transportation (e.g., walking, biking, and transit) and improve roadway safety to help achieve the mobility goals, planning policies, strategic investments, and implementation strategies of Connect SoCal 2024.
- SCAG kicked off several projects supported by the Regional Utilities Supporting Housing (RUSH) program, focused on investments in utility infrastructure planning and capital improvements that will support jurisdictions in meeting the housing production goals defined in the 6th cycle RHNA, housing elements and REAP 2.0 Program objectives. Several more projects are expected to begin by the end of this fiscal year.
- SCAG conducted two Streetlight Insight trainings and seven Toolbox Tuesday sessions. Streetlight Insight is a big data platform that provides insights into travel behavior trends in an easy-to-use interface. SCAG provides licenses to local agency staff so that they can analyze changes in walking, biking, vehicle, and truck volumes, estimating vehicle-mile-traveled (VMT) impacts of development projects, evaluating transportation safety changes, and determining changes in local and regional travel patterns. Toolbox Tuesday sessions provide a range of planning knowledge and technical skills for local planners at no cost. It is a forum for SCAG to

provide technical assistance and share best practices on emerging planning topics such as equity, environmental justice, traffic safety, housing, transportation, sustainability, spatial analytics, programming language, and data literacy.

- SCAG initiated work on the “Regional Resilience Toolkit,” a resource that provides a stepwise approach to resilience planning, including guidance on identifying potential shocks and stressors for local communities and information on funding and financing options. This resource is anticipated to be completed and shared with local and regional partners in Spring 2026.
- SCAG and the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee issued reimbursements for 11 more projects for a total of 14 projects through the Last Mile Freight Program, implementing freight-related clean vehicles, equipment, and infrastructure to support air quality goals.

Regional Performance Monitoring: SCAG continues to monitor regional trends to demonstrate how the region is performing relative to the goals of Connect SoCal and to support performance-based decision-making. The attached report includes a table and summary of 18 performance measures between 2019 and 2023. Through this trend analysis, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel and economic outcomes are clear, though several of the measures are outperforming pre-pandemic statistics.

NEXT STEPS:

Many strategies have ongoing or upcoming work that staff will continue to report on in future updates. While generally SCAG collects a comprehensive summary of progress as part of the next RTP/SCS development cycle, SCAG staff will continue to provide highlights of progress by external agencies and performance measures on a semiannual basis.

FISCAL IMPACT:

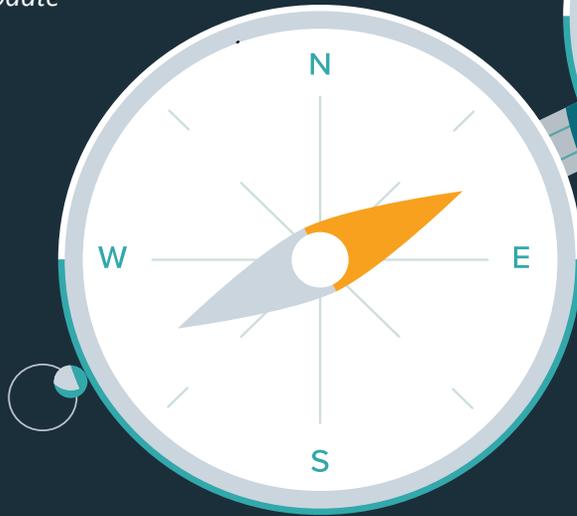
Work associated with this item is included in the FY 24-25 Overall Work Program (Connect SoCal 2024 Implementation Strategies, 310.4874.02).

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. PowerPoint Presentation - Connect SoCal 2024 Implementation Update (June 2025)
2. Connect SoCal 2024 Implementation Report (June 2025)

Connect SoCal 2024

Implementation Strategies Update



The Southern California Association of Governments' 2024-2050 Regional Transportation Plan/ Sustainable Communities Strategy

June 5, 2025

Attachment: PowerPoint Presentation - Connect SoCal 2024 Implementation Update (June 2025) (Connect SoCal 2024: Implementation

Our Role in the Region



Vision and Goals

SCAG leads the region by defining where we want to go and outlining strategies to get us there.

Leadership

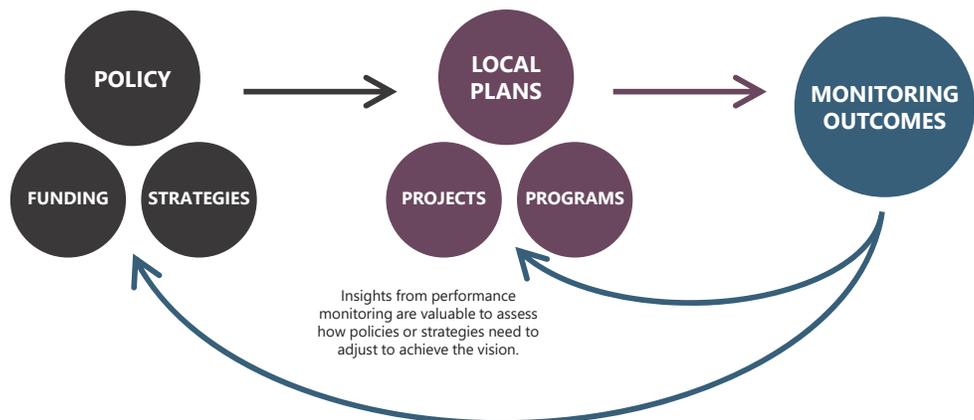
SCAG works with local jurisdictions, transportation commissions, state and federal agencies and various stakeholder groups to identify how we will work together to achieve the regional vision.

Implementation

Jurisdictions take action at the local level to implement work that moves toward achieving this regional vision. SCAG can support implementation by providing policy leadership, research or targeted resources.

Evaluation

Measurement of implementation work and outcomes acts as a benchmark on progress toward achieving the vision.



Plan Impact: Implementation



Regional Leadership

Collaboration and Policy Leadership

Federal Funding Administration

Data Collection, Analysis and Research

Local Technical Assistance Resources

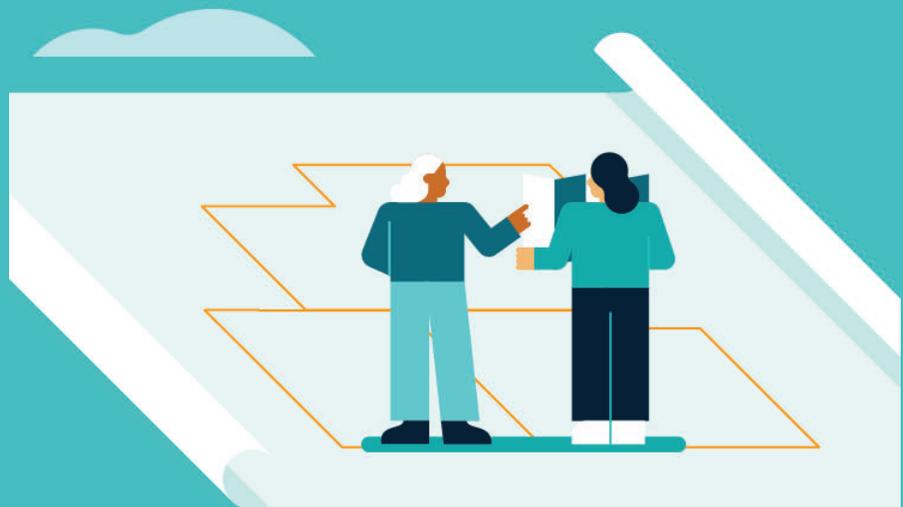
3

Connect SoCal 2024 Implementation Progress



June 2025 Update

- Second semi-annual progress update since adoption of Connect SoCal 2024 in April 2024
- Milestone updates for **52** Implementation Strategies. In total, SCAG progressed on **79 of 93** strategies since April 2024.
- Local Accomplishments
- Performance Measures



4

Vision and Goals



“A Healthy, Prosperous, Accessible and Connected Region for a More Resilient and Equitable Future”



MOBILITY

Build and maintain an integrated multimodal transportation network



ENVIRONMENT

Create a **healthy** region for the people of today and tomorrow



COMMUNITIES

Develop, connect and sustain **livable and thriving** communities



ECONOMY

Support a sustainable, efficient and productive regional environment that provides **opportunities for all** people in the region

Connect SoCal 2024 Implementation Progress



Mobility

Communities

Environment

Economy

Complete Streets and Safety

- Regional Council approved the 2025 Regional Active Transportation Program and funding for 13 projects through the 2024 Sustainable Communities Program Active Transportation and Safety.

Funding the System and System Preservation and Resilience

- Adopted the FFY2026-27 and FFY2027-28 STBG/CMAQ Program Guidelines and initiated the project nomination process.

Transit and Multimodal Integration

- Published the Mobility Hub Design and Implementation Guide, to conceptualize, design, and implement mobility hubs.

Connect SoCal 2024 Implementation Progress



Mobility

Communities

Environment

Economy

Housing the Region

- Issued agreements and kicked-off several projects for the Regional Utilities Supporting Housing (RUSH) program.
- *Local Accomplishment:* Los Lirios, a 64-unit affordable housing development, opened and is located adjacent to the Metro E Line Soto Station.

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Connect SoCal 2024 Implementation Progress



Mobility

Communities

Environment

Economy

Clean Transportation

- Issued a request for proposals for the Innovative Clean Transit Regional Assessment to assess the efforts of the region's transit operators to develop and implement Zero-Emissions Bus Rollout Plans and assess the readiness of the region to transition to zero-emission transit fleets.

Natural and Agricultural Lands Preservation

- Issued a contract for the Natural & Agricultural Lands Economic and Resilience Benefits Study and completed 25 stakeholder interviews to inform the study.

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Connect SoCal 2024 Implementation Progress



Mobility

Communities

Environment

Economy

Goods Movement

- Published the Southern California Zero Emissions Truck Infrastructure Study.

Workforce Development

- Conducted stakeholder outreach and worked on county-level profiles for SCAG's Inclusive Economic Recovery Strategy research.

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THANK YOU!

For more information, please visit:

www.scag.ca.gov



The Southern California Association
of Governments' 2024-2050
Regional Transportation Plan/
Sustainable Communities Strategy

10

Connect SoCal 2024: Implementation Strategies Update, June 2025 (79 of 93 strategies)

SCAG’s role in implementing Connect SoCal 2024 rests on collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders, policy leadership, our role as an information hub, through research—and, lastly, by providing resources to local agencies or jurisdictions to advance their planning efforts. In total, 79 of the 93 strategies have progressed since the adoption of Connect SoCal 2024. Since the update on implementation strategies in November 2024, 44 strategies continued to make significant progress, and 8 strategies began to make progress. Below are key actions and milestones from November 2024 to May 2025 under those four categories:

- **Collaboration and Policy Leadership**
 - SCAG Executive Director Kome Ajise attended the groundbreaking of the Calexico Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) on February 28, 2025, marking a major step forward for safer, more efficient, and sustainable transportation options in the region.
 - SCAG Regional Council President Hagman, Chief Operating Officer Darin Chidsey, and a delegation of SCAG Regional Council members held a mobile workshop in the city of Ontario, touring the Amazon Robotics Fulfillment Center on April 11, 2025.
- **Federal Funding Administration**
 - SCAG’s Regional Council approved the [Surface Transportation Block Grant \(STBG\) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality \(CMAQ\) Program](#) Guidelines and initiated the project nomination process to award \$1.2 billion in federal funds.
 - SCAG’s Regional Council approved the [2025 Regional Active Transportation Program](#), which includes 15 projects (totaling \$35.023 million) and 113 contingency projects (totaling \$972.2 million) that support active transportation in the region.
- **Data Collection, Analysis and Research**
 - SCAG released several data and best practices resources, including the “[Southern California Zero Emissions Truck Infrastructure Study](#),” “[Mobility Hub Design and Implementation Guide](#),” and the SoCal Transportation Safety Predictive Modeling Platform.
- **Local Technical Assistance Resources**
 - SCAG Regional Council approved funding for 13 projects through the 2024 [Sustainable Communities Program](#) Active Transportation and Safety call for projects, awarding a total of \$8.1 million.
 - SCAG kicked off several projects supported by the [Regional Utilities Supporting Housing \(RUSH\) program](#), focused on investments in utility infrastructure planning and capital improvements.

The tables on the following pages provide additional progress details for the 52 of 93 Implementation Strategies that have progressed between November 2024 and May 2025, organized by each of the four Connect SoCal 2024 goal pillars: Mobility, Communities, Environment, and Economy.

MOBILITY

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
Complete Streets	Support implementation of Complete Streets demonstrations (including those addressing curb space management) to accommodate and optimize new technologies and micromobility devices, first/last mile connections to transit and last-mile deliveries	In Progress	SCAG Regional Council approved 13 projects (11 quick-build projects and 2 plans) for funding through the 2024 Sustainable Communities Program Active Transportation and Safety call for projects on December 5, 2024.
Complete Streets	Support community-led Complete Streets plans and projects, including those that take into account how to mitigate or adapt to climate change impacts (e.g., extreme heat)	In Progress	SCAG Regional Council approved 13 projects (11 quick-build projects and 2 plans) for funding through the 2024 Sustainable Communities Program Active Transportation and Safety call for projects on December 5, 2024.
Complete Streets	Encourage data-driven approaches to inform Complete Streets policies	In Progress	SCAG staff attended the second Project Advisory Committee meeting for the California Active Transportation Data Portal.
Complete Streets	Engage regional stakeholders in Complete Streets policy and plan development, implementation and evaluation	In Progress; Ongoing	SCAG staff convened quarterly meetings of the Safe and Active Streets Working Group in December 2024 and March 2025.
Complete Streets	Provide leadership at the state and regional levels to promote Complete Streets, including involvement on the statewide Complete Streets Advisory Committee and the Active Transportation Technical Advisory Committee	In Progress; Ongoing	SCAG staff attended several statewide meetings: State Active Transportation Program Technical Advisory Committee (November 2024 and February 2025), California Walk and Bike Technical Advisory Committee (November 2024 and February 2025), and Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Bicyclist & Pedestrian Challenge Area (November 2024).
Funding the System/User Pricing	*Coordinate with local, regional, state and national partners to support transition to a mileage-based user fee	Ongoing	FHWA awarded SCAG a Strategic Innovation for Revenue Collection grant to test how a mileage-based user fee can work in tandem with existing revenue collection mechanisms, including tolling. With this grant, SCAG, in partnership with NextMove by Cintra, will test a concept for transportation revenue collection technology to capture the full picture of drivers' transportation fees while evaluating policy parameters to holistically address inequity in transportation. This project will help determine viability of a mileage-based user fee at the regional level and uncover how a user-based mechanism can coexist with existing tolling infrastructure.

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
Funding the System/User Pricing	*Support local and regional partners on implementation of dynamic and congestion-based pricing programs, including facilitation of regional coordination	Ongoing	FHWA awarded SCAG a Strategic Innovation for Revenue Collection grant to test how a mileage-based user fee can work in tandem with existing revenue collection mechanisms, including tolling and other congestion-based pricing programs. SCAG continues to support build-out of the regional express lane network through the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) and STBG/CMAQ call for project nomination process.
Funding the System/User Pricing	*Continue development and support for job-center parking pricing, including through Smart Cities and the Mobility Innovations Sustainable Communities Program (SCP) grant program	In Progress	SCAG Regional Council adopted the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2026-2027 and FFY 2027-2028 Surface Transportation Block Grants (STBG)/Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program Guidelines on March 6, 2025 and initiated the project nomination process. The program prioritizes transportation demand management projects, including parking pricing projects.
Funding the System/User Pricing	*Continue to coordinate with regional partners to support build-out of regional express lanes network	Ongoing	SCAG Regional Council adopted the FFY 2026-2027 and FFY 2027-2028 STBG/CMAQ Program Guidelines on March 6, 2025 and initiated the project nomination process. The program prioritizes transportation system management and goods movement projects, including managed lanes projects. SCAG continues to support build-out of the regional express lane network through the FTIP and STBG/CMAQ call for project nomination process.
Funding the System/User Pricing	Study and pilot transportation user-fee programs and mitigation measures that increase equitable mobility	Upcoming	FHWA awarded SCAG a Strategic Innovation for Revenue Collection grant to test how a mileage-based user fee can work in tandem with existing revenue collection mechanisms, including tolling. With this grant, SCAG, in partnership with NextMove by Cintra, will test a concept for transportation revenue collection technology to capture the full picture of drivers' transportation fees while evaluating policy parameters to holistically address inequity in transportation. This project will help determine viability of a mileage-based user fee at the regional level and uncover how a user-based mechanism can coexist with existing tolling infrastructure.

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
Safety	Promote implementation of data-driven approaches to guide transportation safety and security investment decision-making, including development of High Injury Networks and innovative safety modeling tools.	In Progress	SCAG staff hosted two Toolbox Tuesday sessions to demonstrate use of the SoCal Transportation Safety Predictive Modeling Platform in January 2025. SCAG released the SoCal Transportation Safety Predictive Modeling Platform at SCAG’s General Assembly in May 2025.
Safety	Provide leadership at the state and regional levels to promote transportation safety and security planning, including involvement on the statewide Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Steering Committee and Executive Leadership Committee.	Ongoing	SCAG Regional Council adopted the 2025 Regional Transportation Safety Targets on February 6, 2025. Staff have continued to represent MPOs at meetings of the SHSP Steering Committee and the SHSP Bicyclist & Pedestrian Challenge Area Working Groups (November 2024).
Safety	Evaluate projects submitted for inclusion in RTP/SCS and FTIP for their progress in achieving safety targets in the SCAG region.	Ongoing	SCAG continued to upgrade both the FTIP and the Connect SoCal transportation project list tools to better track contributions to the federal performance measures, including safety. SCAG Regional Council adopted the FFY2026-27 and FFY 2027-28 STBG/CMAQ Program Guidelines on March 6, 2025 and initiated the project nomination process. The program selection criteria emphasize federal performance measures, including transportation system safety. SCAG staff are developing a framework to guide integration of a performance-based planning foundation throughout the regional planning process.
Safety	Work with local, state and federal partners to advance safer roadways, including reduced speeds to achieve zero deaths and reduce GHG.	Ongoing	SCAG Regional Council approved 13 projects (11 quick-build projects and 2 plans) for funding through the 2024 Sustainable Communities Program Active Transportation and Safety call for projects on December 5, 2024. SCAG staff attended several statewide meetings: State Active Transportation Program Technical Advisory Committee (November 2024 and February 2025), California Walk and Bike Technical Advisory Committee (November 2024 and February 2025), and SHSP Bicycle & Pedestrian Challenge Area Working Groups (November 2024). SCAG staff convened quarterly meetings of the Safe and Active Streets Working Group in December 2024 and March 2025.

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
System Preservation and Resilience	Per federal requirements, establish and monitor regional targets for pavement conditions, bridge conditions and transit/rail assets, in coordination with Caltrans	Ongoing	SCAG staff continued to coordinate with the California Transportation Commission and Caltrans on the development of the SB 1121 Transportation Needs Assessment and 2026 Transportation Asset Management Plan. SCAG joined FTA's Transit Asset Management Peer Working Group to learn more from other MPOs who are collecting and evaluating transit data.
System Preservation and Resilience	Repair, operate, maintain and preserve the SCAG region's transportation assets in a state of good repair	Ongoing	SCAG's STBG/CMAQ call project nomination process started in March 2025, providing opportunities for financial support to repair, operate, maintain and preserve the SCAG region's transportation assets in a state of good repair.
System Preservation and Resilience	Collaborate to work toward a regional asset management approach	Ongoing	SCAG joined FTA's Transit Asset Management Peer Working Group to learn more from other MPOs who are collecting and evaluating transit data.
System Preservation and Resilience	Evaluate projects submitted for inclusion in the FTIP and RTP/SCS according to contributions in achieving system performance targets	Ongoing	SCAG continued to upgrade both the FTIP and the Connect SoCal transportation project list to better track contributions to the federal performance measures, including system preservation. SCAG Regional Council adopted the FFY2026-27 and FFY 2027-28 STBG/CMAQ Program Guidelines on March 6, 2025 and initiated the project nomination process. The program selection criteria emphasize Federal performance measures, including National Highway System performance.
Technology Integration	Implement Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) priorities to improve the safety and efficiency of the current transportation system	Ongoing	SCAG Regional Council adopted the FFY2026-27 and FFY 2027-28 STBG/CMAQ Program Guidelines on March 6, 2025 and initiated the project nomination process. The program prioritizes transportation system management and goods movement projects, including ITS elements.
Transit and Multimodal Integration	* All Modes. Increase multimodal connectivity (e.g., first/last mile transit and airport connections), which includes planning for and developing mobility hubs throughout the SCAG region	In Progress	SCAG published the Mobility Hub Design and Implementation Guide in March 2025, which provides a supportive framework for local implementation, equipping local jurisdictions and potential partners with resources to conceptualize, design, and implement mobility hubs. SCAG staff partnered with four local jurisdictions to develop mobility hub conceptual designs. SCAG staff hosted a Mobility Hubs Toolbox Tuesday training session for local practitioners on March 18, 2025.

Attachment: Connect SoCal 2024 Implementation Report (June 2025) (Connect SoCal 2024:

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
Transit and Multimodal Integration	*Transit/Rail. Expand the region’s dedicated lanes network—including new bus rapid transit, dedicated bus lanes, express bus service on managed and express lanes—as well as the region’s urban and passenger rail network and transit/rail signal priority treatments. Improve transit/rail frequency, reliability, and fare and scheduling integration across operators.	In Progress	SCAG Executive Director Kome Ajise continued to serve as a member of the CalSTA Transit Transformation Task Force. SCAG staff shared updates and sought feedback on recommended strategies and actions via the Regional Transit Technical Advisory Committee and the County Transportation Commission Planning Directors' meetings.
Transit and Multimodal Integration	* Transit/Rail. Through land use planning, support residential development along high-frequency transit corridors and around transit/rail facilities and centers	In Progress	SCAG continues to monitor progress on land use developments along transit/rail corridors including the RCTC Core Capacity Innovative Study, and other LA Metro and Metrolink efforts.
Transit and Multimodal Integration	* Active Transportation. Support community-led active transportation and safety plans, projects and programs (e.g., Safe Routes to Schools). Partner with local jurisdictions on demonstrations and quick-build projects through SCAG’s Go Human initiative	In Progress	SCAG Regional Council approved 13 projects (11 quick-build projects and 2 plans) for funding through the 2024 Sustainable Communities Program Active Transportation and Safety call for projects on December 5, 2024.
Transit and Multimodal Integration	* Active Transportation. Expand the region’s networks of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This includes creating more low stress facilities, such as separated bikeways and bike paths, slow streets, and open streets	In Progress	SCAG Regional Council approved 13 projects (11 quick-build projects and 2 plans) for funding through the 2024 Sustainable Communities Program Active Transportation and Safety call for projects on December 5, 2024.
Transportation System Management	Evaluate projects submitted for inclusion in RTP/SCS and FTIP for progress in achieving travel-time reliability in the SCAG region	Ongoing	SCAG continued to upgrade both the FTIP and the Connect SoCal transportation project list to better track contributions to the federal performance measures, including system reliability. SCAG Regional Council adopted the FFY2026–2027 and FFY 2027–2028 STBG/CMAQ Program Guidelines on March 6, 2025 and initiated the project nomination process. The program selection criteria emphasize Federal transportation performance measures.
Transportation Demand Management	Incentivize and promote the development of more Transportation Management Agencies/Organizations (TMAs/TMOs)	Upcoming	SCAG issued a request for proposals for the 2028 Games TDM Support Plan, which includes work on TMA/TMOs partnerships.

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
Transportation Demand Management	Facilitate partnerships and provide a forum between public and private sector Transportation Demand Management (TDM) practitioners and stakeholders to develop and implement policies, plans and programs that encourage use of transportation alternatives.	Ongoing	SCAG convened monthly Games Mobility Executives TDM Subcommittee meetings to coordinate planning for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. SCAG issued a regional TDM survey to collect information on TDM efforts across the region and confirm interest in engagement and planning for the Games. SCAG staff are planning for the first Regional TDM Forum in April 2025.
Transportation Demand Management	Develop and promote the use of a regional TDM data clearinghouse. Leverage data and TDM Toolbox best practices to identify cost-effective strategies.	Upcoming	SCAG issued a request for proposals for the 2028 Games TDM Support Plan, which includes an evaluation of pilot and permanent projects and programs.
Transportation Demand Management	Collaborate to develop regional and localized marketing campaigns that promote TDM modes such as transit, carpool, walking and biking to school.	Upcoming	SCAG issued a request for proposals for the 2028 Games TDM Support Plan, which includes support on communications.

COMMUNITIES

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
Housing the Region	Identify and pursue partnerships at the local, regional, state and federal levels to align utility, transit and infrastructure investments with housing development and equitable outcomes across the region	In Progress	SCAG has executed 3 MOUs for the Regional Utilities Supporting Housing (RUSH) program and expects the remaining projects executed by the end of May 2025.

ENVIRONMENT

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
Air Quality	Coordinate with local, regional, state and federal partners to meet federal and state ambient air-quality standards and improve public health	Ongoing	SCAG received final federal approval of the transportation conformity determination for the FTIP and Connect SoCal 2024 Amendment 1. SCAG staff hosted monthly Transportation Conformity Working Group meetings and processed at least 11 project-level conformity review requests. SCAG coordinated with federal (EPA and FHWA), state (Caltrans), and local (SBCTA) partners on the development of the highway project list in response to the highway sanction in the Mojave Desert area, while actively engaging with the Mojave Desert AQMD to identify ways to resolve the highway sanction. SCAG collaborated with San Joaquin Valley MPO on reviews of and comments for CARB's new EMFAC202Y model. SCAG coordinated with CARB to test new conformity budgets for the 2015 70ppb ozone state implementation plans.
Clean Transportation	Maintain a robust Clean Technology Program that focuses on planning, research, evaluation, stakeholder support and advocacy.	Ongoing	SCAG provided technical support on grant applications for local agencies, including the U.S. Joint Office of Energy and Transportation Ride and Drive Electric grant program to fund projects to improve performance, reliability, and resiliency of electric vehicle (EV) charging while strengthening the EV workforce, and the U.S. National Science Foundation Smart and Connected Communities grant program that aims to accelerate the creation of novel intelligent technologies and concepts through high-risk/high-reward research that addresses major challenges and issues faced by communities across the nation.
Clean Transportation	Share information and provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions and operators on opportunities to upgrade their fleets and accelerate deployment of supporting infrastructure	Ongoing	SCAG staff provided support on applications and programming development for truck fleet operators and Clean Cities Coalition stakeholders.

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
Clean Transportation	Investigate how zero-emission vehicles can strengthen resilience through vehicle to-grid technologies or other opportunities where batteries can be used to enhance capacity of renewable energy sources	Ongoing	SCAG staff developed programming for the 2025 General Assembly focused on zero-emission vehicles, resilience, electrification, and grid capacities. SCAG provided technical support on grant applications for local agencies, including the U.S. Department of Energy's Vehicle Technologies Office Program Wide Funding for Vehicle Technology Integration, which includes a focus on local power grid hosting capacity, future upgrade plans, and the costs of grid interconnection and energization which require multi-megawatt capacity at scale.
Clean Transportation	Investigate opportunities to install charging stations that can be used by multiunit dwellers that don't have the same opportunities for charging as single-family homeowners	In Progress	SCAG provided technical support on grant applications for local agencies focused on the installation of EV charging in multiunit dwellings. This includes the California Energy Commission's Reliable, Equitable, and Accessible Charging for Multi-family Housing 3.0 grant that focuses on demonstrating replicable and scalable business and technology models for large-scale deployment of EV charging infrastructure to maximize access for multifamily housing residents.
Clean Transportation	Support the deployment of clean transit and technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of the CARB innovative clean technology rule	Upcoming	SCAG issued a request for proposals for the Innovative Clean Transit Regional Assessment in January 2025. SCAG anticipates awarding contracts by June 2025.
Climate Resilience	Research existing and potential options to fund the climate resilience efforts of implementation agencies.	Complete	SCAG integrated panels into the Energy and Environment Committee and the Community, Economic, and Human Development Committee in March 2025 that focused on the structure and uses of Climate Resilience Districts (CRDs) and Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (EIFDs) for increasing local funding for climate resilience.
Climate Resilience	Collaborate with partners to foster adoption of systems and technologies that can reduce water demand and/or increase water supply, such as alternative groundwater recharge technologies, stormwater capture systems, urban cooling infrastructure and greywater usage systems.	In Progress	SCAG researched and interviewed a Groundwater Sustainability Agency and several other water agencies to gather information on water management challenges related to water supply, including groundwater for Phase I of the Water White Paper.
Climate Resilience	Support use of systems-based risk-management methods and tools to help implementation	In Progress	SCAG is pursuing a partnership with the State of California to implement the SoCal Greenprint Tool and support regular data and functionality updates.

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
	agencies identify and reduce resilience risks for vulnerable communities.		
Climate Resilience	Provide local and regional partners with resources, education and trainings to identify and protect areas vulnerable to climate effects and other resilience shocks and stressors, particularly for low-income communities and communities of color.	In Progress	SCAG initiated work on the Regional Resilience Toolkit, a resource that provides a stepwise approach to resilience planning, including guidance on identifying potential shocks and stressors for local communities and information on funding and financing options. This resource is anticipated to be completed and shared with local and regional partners in Spring 2026.
Climate Resilience	Support implementing agencies' efforts to include climate-ready home-hardening strategies in new construction as well as the retrofitting of existing structures to minimize the potential loss of housing units stemming from climate-related hazards.	In Progress	SCAG hosted a panel on post-wildfire recovery at a special February meeting of the Joint Policy Committees. Included in the panel were the Planning Directors for the City of Los Angeles and County of Los Angeles where home hardening strategies for a resilient recovery were discussed.
Climate Resilience	Support integration of climate vulnerability assessments into infrastructure planning and delivery for implementing agencies.	In Progress	SCAG initiated work on the Regional Resilience Toolkit, a resource that provides a stepwise approach to resilience planning, including guidance on identifying potential shocks and stressors for local communities and information on funding and financing options. This resource is anticipated to be completed and shared with local and regional partners in Spring 2026.
Natural and Agricultural Lands Preservation	Identify and leverage resources for research, policies and programs to conserve and restore natural and agricultural lands.	In Progress	SCAG released the request for proposals for the Natural & Agricultural Lands Economic and Resilience Benefits Study and issued a contract in March 2025. SCAG staff completed 25 stakeholder interviews to inform the study.
Natural and Agricultural Lands Preservation	Explore opportunities to increase and quantify the carbon sequestration potential and resilience benefits of natural and agricultural lands—and pursue funding for implementation and demonstration projects.	In Progress	SCAG released the request for proposals for the Natural & Agricultural Lands Economic and Resilience Benefits Study and issued a contract in March 2025. SCAG staff completed 25 stakeholder interviews to inform the study.
Natural and Agricultural Lands Preservation	Support the integration of nature-based solutions into implementing agency plans to address urban heat, organic waste reduction, protection of wetlands, habitat and wildlife corridor restoration, greenway connectivity and similar efforts.	In Progress	SCAG released the request for proposals for the Natural & Agricultural Lands Economic and Resilience Benefits Study and issued a contract in March 2025. SCAG staff completed 25 stakeholder interviews to inform the study.
Sustainable Development	Monitor and pursue funding opportunities that can foster sustainable and equitable land use and development across the SCAG region. Explore the	In Progress	SCAG continues to implement the Programs to Accelerate Transformative Housing (PATH) program, which includes projects that establish and provide funding to revolving loan and similar

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
	feasibility of creating a pilot grant program to support local planning and/or implementation.		programs. These programs support the creation of affordable housing in various areas throughout the region.
Sustainable Development	Research the availability of resources that can support the development of water and energy-efficient building practices, including green infrastructure.	Ongoing	SCAG staff researched incentives for rebuild/recovery for a number of water and energy-efficient building practices, including fire resilient homes, fire resilient landscapes/water efficient landscapes/low impact development, cool roofs, solar systems/battery storage, as well as energy and water efficiency installations. This research was integrated into LA County's Rebuilding Resources Guide to facilitate and accelerate the repair and/or rebuilding of homes destroyed in the Eaton and Palisades fires.

ECONOMY

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
Goods Movement	Manage the implementation and transition to near-zero and zero-emission technologies for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles and supporting infrastructure.	In Progress	SCAG completed the Southern California Zero Emissions Truck Infrastructure Study and will be presenting the final report to SCAG's Transportation Committee in June 2025. SCAG staff continue to manage multiple agreements with local agencies as part of the Last Mile Freight Program for both near-zero and zero-emission technology implementation in the South Coast Air Basin.
Goods Movement	Leverage the Last Mile Freight Program to develop and implement operational concepts with a core focus on last-mile delivery strategies across urban and rural communities.	In Progress	SCAG and the Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee issued reimbursements for 11 more projects for a total of 14 projects through the Last Mile Freight Program. SCAG Regional Council directed funds for the Last Mile Freight Program Phase 1 component toward the deployment of Class 4 and Class 5 battery-electric vehicles.
Goods Movement	Continue to coordinate with federal and state partners on goods movement planning efforts, including the Last Mile Freight Program, to position the SCAG region for further funding opportunities	In Progress	SCAG hosted a quarterly Goods Movement Regional Partner Agency Meeting with the local seaports and county departments of transportation and a Caltrans Headquarters/District Meeting in March 2025. SCAG continued monthly coordination with Caltrans Headquarters and SANDAG.
Workforce Development	Encourage the growth of, and equitable access to, living-wage jobs throughout the region	In Progress	SCAG's consultant is developing county-level profiles that synthesize strategies and research from California Jobs First collaboratives and SCAG's Inclusive Economic Recovery Strategy research to inform local decision-making.

Category	Strategy	Status	Action or Milestone
Workforce Development	Develop resources for understanding, analyzing and communicating complex regional economic and workforce data	In Progress	SCAG conducted stakeholder outreach to inform a report on expanding access to apprenticeships in the SCAG region.

Local Accomplishments

SCAG plays a key role in leading, partnering, and supporting actions to implement Connect SoCal 2024, but local agencies are critical in making the most immediate and impactful changes in the region. To highlight some of the successes in local implementation of Connect SoCal 2024, here is a brief list of some of the accomplishments in the SCAG region since last fall:

- In August 2024, Valley Express Dial-A-Ride and VCTC began a fixed-route service connecting Fillmore and Moorpark.
- In October 2024, Brightline West received \$3 billion of federal funding for a high-speed rail project between Southern California and Las Vegas with plans for three stations in California (Victor Valley, Hesperia, Rancho Cucamonga) and connections to existing Metrolink stations. Construction is expected to begin in 2025.
- In October 2024, ICTC was awarded \$12.6 million by the state to construct a transit facility at the Calexico Port of Entry which will integrate various modes of transportation. The planning phase is expected to start in early 2025.
- In November 2024, RCTC was awarded \$40.5 million for a new Metrolink station and mobility hub in the unincorporated community of Mead Valley. Metrolink 91/Perris Valley Line will bring more transportation options to the region, especially rapidly growing communities along the I-215 corridor.
- In November 2024, the OCTA Board of Directors approved the purchase of 40 hydrogen-fuel cell buses and 10 battery electric buses to replace buses at the end of their useful lifespan. This milestone aligns with CARB’s 2018 Innovative Clean Transit Rule. The new buses are expected to start service in late 2026.
- In November 2024, a 64-unit affordable housing project called Los Lirios opened. This was a project under LA Metro’s Joint Development Program and is located adjacent to the Metro E Line Soto Station.
- Starting in November 2024, North America’s first federally compliant self-powered, zero-emission passenger train was being tested along Metrolink’s Arrow corridor on the San Bernardino Line. The Zero-Emission Multiple Unit (ZEMU) uses a hybrid hydrogen and battery technology to propel the train and power onboard electrical systems. After the test ends, the ZEMU is intended for safe entry into service in early 2025.
- In December 2024, the City of Barstow celebrated the completion of the North First Avenue Bridge project that replaces a structure built in 1930 that no longer met modern safety and functionality standards. Spanning approximately 1,179 feet, the new

concrete bridge features a modern design with enhanced amenities, including a wider pedestrian walkway, eight-foot shoulders for bicyclists, and a lookout point over the railway.

- In January 2025, construction began on Riverside County’s I-15 Smart Freeway Pilot Project. Once complete, the project will be the first of its kind with the goal of improving traffic flow.
- In January 2025, OCTA shared the 2025 Board and CEO Strategic Initiatives and Action Plan to guide agency efforts throughout the coming year, with the focus on continuing to deliver the public with a transportation network that is balanced, reliable, and equitable, while remaining fiscally responsible and resilient.
- In February 2025, ICTC broke ground on the new Calexico Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC). The ITC in downtown Calexico, located within a few blocks of the West Port of Entry, will provide multiple transportation services in one place.
- In February 2025, the OCTA Board of Directors voted to advance four priority projects under the Coastal Rail Stabilization Priority Project, a significant milestone in safeguarding the rail corridor.
- In March 2025, the SBCTA Board of Directors approved their Final Long Range Multimodal Transportation Plan.

Performance Measures Update

SCAG monitors regional performance through the use of a variety of metrics. Although the impact of Connect SoCal 2024 may not be detectable only one year out from adoption, SCAG continues to monitor regional trends to demonstrate how the region is performing relative to the goals of Connect SoCal and to support performance-based planning and decision-making.

Table 1 summarizes regional performance trends for 18 measures between 2019, the base year for Connect SoCal 2024 analysis, and 2023, the latest available full year of data for the measures. This provides a snapshot of regional performance in the years since the previous Connect SoCal 2020 adoption and leading up to adoption of Connect SoCal 2024. Through this trend analysis, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are clear, though we are starting to see measures that outperform pre-COVID statistics. As shown in the table, the comparison of metrics between 2019 and 2023 reveals the following:

- Due to the increases in work from home, non-single occupancy vehicle commute mode share increased significantly by 7.2 percentage points, while mode share for active transportation and transit decreased slightly (0.1 and 0.6 percentage points, respectively).
- Daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita is 1.1 miles below 2019 levels, however the trend between 2020 and 2023 shows that it is steadily increasing.

- The total number of collision-related fatalities decreased by 40 fatalities, but the total number of collision-related serious injuries increased by 274 victims.
- The median annual household income increased by \$20,510 (an increase of about 28.5 percent).
- The number of new housing units permitted increased by 9,061, for a total of 62,134 units permitted in 2023.

Table 1: Selected Connect SoCal 2024 Performance Measures, 2019-2023

Performance Measure	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019 vs 2023
Average Commute Travel Time (mins) ¹	32.0	31.1	30.9	30.6	30.8	-1.2
Non-SOV Commute Travel Mode Share ¹	24.0%	25.5%	27.5%	29.2%	31.2%	+7.2
Active Transportation Commute Mode Share ¹	2.7%	2.7%	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%	-0.1
Transit Commute Mode Share ¹	3.8%	3.9%	3.6%	3.4%	3.2%	-0.6
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per capita ^{2,3}	22.9	20.4	21.3	21.7	21.8	-1.1
Number of Collision-Related Fatalities ⁴	1,601	1,732	1,916	2,012	1,561	-40
Number of Collision-Related Serious Injuries ⁵	7,162	6,553	7,964	7,881	7,436	+274
Number of Active Transportation Fatalities and Serious Injuries ^{4,5}	2,261	2,009	2,354	2,487	2,441	+180
Household Housing Cost Burden ¹	27.6%	27.2%	27.0%	26.8%	26.7%	-0.9
Annual Household Income ¹	\$71,994	\$75,262	\$80,450	\$88,006	\$92,504	+\$20,510
New Housing Units Permitted ⁶	53,073	41,201	11,569	59,136	62,134	+9,061
Household Broadband Access ¹	85.8%	88.2%	93.1%	93.3%	94.4%	+8.6
No Health Insurance Coverage ¹	9.0%	8.6%	8.5%	7.7%	7.4%	-1.6
Unemployment Rate ^{1,3}	6.2%	6.4%	8.8%	5.5%	5.5%	-0.7
Income Below Poverty Line ^{1,3}	14.0%	13.2%	12.8%	12.6%	12.4%	-1.6

Sources:

- 1: U.S. Census Bureau
- 2: California Public Road Data from the Highway Performance Monitoring System
- 3: California Department of Finance
- 4: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Fatality Analysis Reporting System
- 5: California Highway Patrol, Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System
- 6: Southern California Association of Governments



AGENDA ITEM 4

REPORT

Southern California Association of Governments
June 5, 2025

To: Executive/Administration Committee (EAC)
Community Economic & Human Development Committee (CEHD)
Transportation Committee (TC)
Energy and Environment Committee (EEC)

From: Sarah Dominguez, Planning Supervisor
(213) 236-1918, dominguezs@scag.ca.gov

Subject: Connect SoCal 2024: Sustainable Communities Strategy Acceptance and Target Updates

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S
APPROVAL**

Kome Ajise

RECOMMENDED ACTION FOR EEC:

Information Only – No Action Required

RECOMMENDED ACTION FOR EAC, CEHD, AND TC:

Receive and File

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This item supports the following Strategic Priority

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On May 7, 2025, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) notified SCAG staff that they have accepted SCAG's determination that the Connect SoCal 2024 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy achieves the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets set by CARB. This affirms the work by SCAG to integrate land use planning with transportation policies and investments to achieve statewide climate goals. However, the prolonged review process leading up to CARB's acceptance underscores the issues raised by SCAG about the need to revisit the SB 375 framework to better focus on implementation.

BACKGROUND:

In April 2024, the SCAG Regional Council adopted Connect SoCal 2024, the 2024-2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). In July 2024, SCAG submitted the SCS to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) for their evaluation that the SCS would, if implemented, meet the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets. Pursuant to Government Code Section § 65080(b)(2)(J)(ii) review by CARB "shall be limited to acceptance or rejection of the metropolitan planning organization's determination that the strategy submitted would, if implemented, achieve the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets established by the State Air Resources Board. The State Air Resources Board shall complete its review within 60 days."

Review of Connect SoCal 2024

On May 7, 2025, CARB staff confirmed via email that they have accepted SCAG’s determination that Connect SoCal 2024 meets the GHG emission reduction targets. They stated that their formal report will take some time to complete and publish. CARB’s acceptance was received 10 months after SCAG’s initial SCS submittal. This protracted review process highlights the challenges metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) have raised in response to the upcoming 2026 target update process. Specifically, it reflects the degree to which the current SB 375 framework has evolved towards an extensive technical process instead of prioritizing implementation¹. The additional, post-submission engagement with CARB staff for their review did not relate to or result in any updated policies, programs or investments in Connect SoCal 2024.

2026 SB 375 Target Update Process

Pursuant to Government Code Section § 65080(b)(2)(A)(iv) CARB shall update regional targets every eight years. SCAG’s targets were last updated in 2018, keeping the 8% reduction from 2005 levels by 2020 and updating the target for 2035 to a 19% reduction from 2005 levels. The next target update process must be concluded by 2026 to meet the eight-year statutory requirement.

CARB initiated the target update process in July 2024 with a public workshop. In response to their request for detailed data from MPOs, the four largest MPOs in California wrote a joint letter to CARB requesting that the current SB 375 Targets and SCS Guidelines process be paused to allow for a holistic review of SB 375. In the letter, the MPOs requested to engage in a government-to-government dialogue with CARB, the California Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and the California Department of Housing and Community Development to collaboratively discuss how to achieve multiple state and regional goals and shift the focus towards implementation. In response, CARB stated that they cannot commit to pausing the SB 375 target update process given the statutory requirements and necessity to advance “analytical staff work, support an inclusive public dialogue, and conduct an environmental review on these topics”.²

In response to the requested government-to-government dialogue, CARB agreed to participate. From October 2024 to February 2025, SCAG and other MPOs from across the state met collectively with representatives from each of the above state agencies to discuss challenges with and potential solutions for the SB 375 framework. This forum allowed for robust dialogue which helped to solidify MPO perspectives on the principles for SB 375 reform. Going forward, SCAG will continue to engage with CARB directly and through the public target setting process.

¹ SCAG Energy and Environment Committee, November 7, 2024: Senate Bill 375: Joint MPO Letter to CARB <https://scag.igam2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=2528&Inline=True#page=25>

² Ibid.

On May 21, 2025, CARB staff hosted a public workshop on the target setting process which included proposed target scenarios. SCAG will submit a joint public comment letter reiterating issues raised during earlier meetings about the applicability of the Scoping Plan scenario to MPO targets and the need to clarify what technical assumptions will be used in both the target setting and the SCS evaluation. SCAG and other MPOs across the state have requested that CARB maintain the current targets. Given the economic and demographic headwinds in achieving GHG reductions and the inability to take credit for the electric vehicle transition, MPOs will face challenges in maintaining their current target achievement.

Next Steps

CARB anticipates releasing a draft target report in fall 2025 and then a final report and environmental assessment in spring 2026. Updated targets will apply to SCAG's next SCS, currently anticipated to be adopted in 2028. SCAG will continue to engage with CARB as the process progresses and will update SCAG's Policy Committees once CARB's draft report is released. Concurrently, SCAG will continue to work with local stakeholders and other MPOs to seek potential legislative reform to address the issues with the current SB 375 framework and the barriers to SCS implementation. Staff will bring these matters to the Policy Committees and the Legislative/Communications and Membership Committee for discussion.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Work associated with this item is included in the FY 24-25 Overall Work Program (310.4874.01: Connect SoCal Development).



AGENDA ITEM 5

REPORT

Southern California Association of Governments
June 5, 2025

To: Energy & Environment Committee (EEC)

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S
APPROVAL**

From: Kimberly Clark, Planning Supervisor
(213) 236-1844, clark@scag.ca.gov

Subject: Water Action Resolution White Paper

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Information Only – No Action Required

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This item supports the following Strategic Priority 1: Establish and implement a regional vision for a sustainable future.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On October 6, 2022, the Regional Council (RC) unanimously adopted the Water Action Resolution (Resolution No. 22-647-3) that called for regional collaboration “to address the region’s water challenges and catalyze opportunities to ensure a clean, safe, affordable, and reliable water supply for the region.” Connect SoCal 2024, SCAG’s Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, integrates the priorities set forth in the resolution and policies and implementation strategies that focus on issues such as sustainable water management, integrated housing and water use planning, and nature-based solutions.

The Water Resolution White Paper provides a scan of major water management challenges in the region and potential strategies to address them. This staff report summarizes the White Paper findings, which are based on a combination of research and stakeholder input. The findings will inform SCAG’s efforts to support initiatives, projects, and programs that advance water resilience in the region. This item will also include an expert panel examining the impacts of wildfires on water supply and resilience.

BACKGROUND:

The Water Resolution White Paper approach consisted of three parts: (1) research on local and regional water management issues and promising strategies, (2) a landscape analysis of water management data availability and quality, and (3) research on key water management actors across the SCAG region and their functions.

In addition to desktop research, the project team conducted 17 one-hour virtual interviews with 22 stakeholders. This included state water agencies, groundwater management agencies, water districts (including wholesalers and retailers), flood control districts, regional conservation authorities, county transportation commissions, and community-based organizations.

1. Major Water Management Issues and Promising Strategies

Exploration of major water management issues in the SCAG region and promising strategies that could increase water resilience. In addition to broader water management issues, the project explored the intersections of water with key topics such as land use, housing development and production and sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and recreation, logistics and supply chain, energy, and mining.

2. Water Management Data

The project team also assessed the availability, quality, and consistency of data used for water management throughout the SCAG region. Findings from this effort helped to identify opportunities to improve data availability through regional collaboration. The project team organized the findings based on data source and ownership, spatial scale, and gaps in data for the region.

3. Water Management Stakeholders

The project team identified key actors involved in water management in the SCAG region and illustrated the relationships between them in a series of stakeholder maps. These maps include the major water suppliers and the main regulatory bodies for each county and visualize water flows between agencies.

High Level Findings

The Water White Paper organizes (1) major water management challenges and (2) key data gaps and challenges identified through this analysis into five areas: Reliable, Clean and Safe, Affordable, Accessible, and Resilient. These five indicators align with California’s Water Code, which states that “every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water...”¹ They also align with the US Water Alliance’s inclusion of resilience in its Pillars of Water Equity.²

1. Reliable

Water reliability considers the number of water sources and the reliability of each source to which a jurisdiction or water service area has access.

- I. Increased demand from anticipated residential and industrial growth may strain limited water supplies, requiring increased coordination between water managers and local**

¹ California State Water Resources Control Board. (n.d.). Human Right to Water Portal. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/hr2w/

² US Water Alliance. (n.d.). Water Equity Network. <https://uswateralliance.org/programs/water-equity-network/>

planning agencies. Several counties in the SCAG region are experiencing rapid population growth and growth in new, water intensive industries such as artificial intelligence, and lithium and geothermal mining. To ensure that water supply and infrastructure keep pace with growing demand, agencies overseeing water management, land use, and housing development will need to coordinate on plans for residential and industrial growth and secure funding for new and existing infrastructure.

- II. **There is increased pressure for local water agencies to diversify water supplies to respond to drought and climate change. Both imported and local water sources are vulnerable to climate hazards like drought.** Water districts are investing in strategies such as stormwater capture, water recycling, and groundwater recharge, to diversify their water portfolios.
- III. **Extreme wet and dry periods due to climate change amplify the need for more water storage to capture rainwater during wet years and support sufficient water availability during dry periods.** Capturing water at the local level through multi-benefit stormwater capture strategies can reduce reliance on imported water sources and increase local water storage and reliability.

2. Clean and Safe

Clean and safe water translates to the quality of water for purposes such as human consumption, cooking, and sanitation. The quality of water delivered is affected by the source water, treatment methods, and the material, age, and operations of the applicable conveyance and delivery systems. Clean and safe also refers to the quality of water bodies, such as rivers and streams.

- I. **Aging infrastructure and untreated water impact the quality of local water supplies.** Aging water infrastructure can contaminate and degrade water quality as it travels from the source to a residential or commercial tap. In some rural communities outside the jurisdiction of a water district, some residents must rely on untreated water for non-potable uses and bottled water delivery service for drinking water.
- II. **Water runoff from urban, industrial, and agricultural sources negatively impacts drinking water supplies and surface water in the region.** Runoff from local industry, such as manufacturing, can flow into and contaminate groundwater and surface water resources. Impervious surfaces—surfaces that water flows over and not through—contribute to increased runoff and compound these water quality challenges. Green infrastructure projects that capture and filter water can help reduce polluted runoff.
- III. **Agricultural runoff can similarly degrade groundwater and surface water quality and can have broader impacts on surrounding watersheds and communities.** For example, the Salton Sea, located in Imperial and Riverside counties, relies on agricultural runoff as its

main water source. Efforts to reduce agricultural water use, such as fallowing, have lowered the Salton Sea's water levels, exposing seabed dust that has grown toxic from decades of agricultural runoff. The public health impacts on local communities highlight the importance of coordination between planning agencies, water managers, and regulators to manage runoff.

3. Affordable

Water affordability refers to the portion of household median income allocated to paying for water. Low affordability of water means that communities pay a relatively high cost for water.

- I. **Low-income communities across the SCAG region are struggling to afford rising water rates due to the increased costs of water management.** Water management costs are increasing for water districts due to factors such as increased water quality regulations and the cost of maintaining and updating aging water infrastructure. These rising costs have a disproportionate impact on low-income communities and households who may struggle to pay more expensive water bills.

4. Accessible

Access to water refers to the presence and condition of water conveyance and flood control infrastructure. Areas with aging infrastructure that impacts water service or lack existing or comprehensive distribution networks have lower accessibility.

- I. **New infrastructure and upgrades to existing infrastructure are needed to support growth and to provide reliable water access for communities.** As noted above, existing infrastructure in many areas requires upgrades to meet the needs of existing communities, especially in historically disadvantaged communities. Further, as communities in the region experience residential and commercial growth, more infrastructure will be needed to support this development.
- II. **Funding needed upgrades to aging water conveyance and flood control infrastructure is challenging, especially for small water systems that have limited funding capacity.** Many water districts are upgrading their water conveyance and flood control infrastructure due to projected climate hazards and the age of their pipelines. Securing funding for these upgrades can be a challenge, especially because funding for maintenance of existing infrastructure often competes with funding for new projects. Smaller water districts are disproportionately impacted by these challenges due to limited funding and staff capacity, pointing to the need for more funding support for these districts.

5. Resilient

Resilience refers to the ability for a community or water source to “bounce back” from droughts, floods, and sea level rise, as well as earthquakes or other disasters.

- I. **With more extreme climate impacts projected, there is a need to invest in adaptive and resilient solutions.** To protect water sources against these threats, water districts are investing in emergency planning and infrastructure upgrades to increase water resilience.

In addition to the overview of the Water White Paper findings this item will also feature a panel discussion focusing on water management challenges stemming from wildfires and best practices to address them. Featured on the panel will be:

- **Rodney Woods, Deputy General Manager of the Moulton Niguel Water District.** Rodney oversees the administration and direction of the District's operations. He will discuss Moulton Niguel's Local Fire Preparedness Plan, which focuses on ensuring that water infrastructure and supply are prepared for emergencies.
- **Tracy Quinn, President and CEO of Heal the Bay.** Tracy leads a dynamic team of scientists, policy experts, outreach specialists, and educators in pursuit of Heal the Bay's clean water mission. Tracy will discuss Heal the Bay's work related to ocean water quality following the Pacific Palisades wildfire.
- **Greg Woodside, Chief of Planning & Watershed Resilience at the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District.** Greg manages San Bernardino Valley's efforts on Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) at Seven Oaks Dam and evaluation of impacts of emerging constituents in water quality, as well as works on the development of the District's Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan. Greg will discuss the District's Headwaters Resiliency Partnership program and its efforts to reduce the negative impacts of wildfires on watersheds and restore habitat.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Work associated with this item is included in the FY 2025 Overall Work Program (290-4914.01/2 Land Use Alternatives Development).

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. PowerPoint Presentation - Water Resolution White Paper: Regional Findings
2. 250523 SCAG WRWAP Task 2.4 Summary Memo FINAL mod



Water Resolution White Paper: Regional Findings

June 5, 2025

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Agenda

- 1 Project Context
- 2 Water Resilience Challenges and Opportunities
- 3 Data Gaps and Challenges
- 4 Conclusion & Next Steps



2



PROJECT CONTEXT

Regional Context

- By 2050, an additional 2.5 million people are projected to live in the SCAG region (as compared to 2019). The region is also anticipating major growth in water-intensive industries.
- Water agencies are grappling with issues related to water reliability, quality, affordability, accessibility, and resilience and need funding to address them.
- To keep pace with growth projections and address these challenges, housing agencies, land use planners, and water managers will need to coordinate.

Project Components

Stakeholder Interviews

- 17 interviews (22 stakeholders)
- Interviewees represented a state agency, a groundwater management agency, water districts, a regional conservation district, flood control districts, and community based-organizations (CBOs)
- Focused on major water management challenges and promising strategies to address them

Water Data Landscape Analysis

- Included desktop research, geospatial analysis, and stakeholder interviews
- Reviewed availability, quality, and consistency of water management data
- Focused analysis on water equity indicators: reliable, clean and safe, affordable, accessible, and resilient

Network Mapping

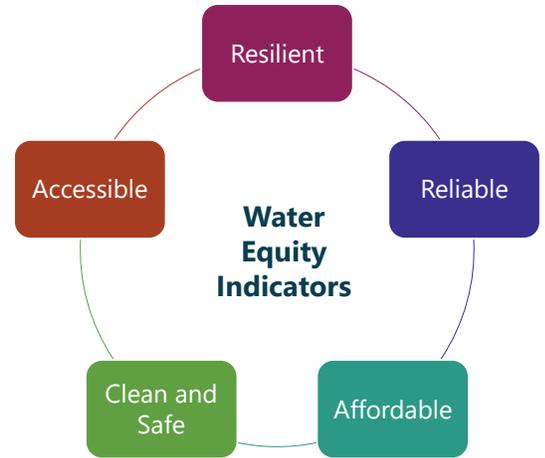
- Mapped key actors involved in water management in each county:
 - Federal, state, and local regulatory bodies
 - Public, private, and mutual water companies, including wholesalers and retailers
- Mapped each entity's function and contractual/regulatory relationships



REGIONAL WATER RESILIENCE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Five Indicators for Water Equity

- **Reliable** – the number of water sources and the reliability of each source.
- **Clean and Safe** – the quality of water for purposes such as human consumption, cooking, and sanitation.
- **Affordable** – the portion of household median income allocated to paying for water.
- **Accessible** – the presence and condition of water conveyance infrastructure.
- **Resilient** – the ability for a community or water source to “bounce back” from climate change impacts like droughts, floods, and sea level rise.



Regional Themes: **Reliable**

Takeaways

- **Projected increased demand** from industrial, commercial, and residential growth may strain limited water supplies.
- Pressure to **diversify water supplies** to respond to climate change and to meet demand.
- Extreme wet and dry periods due to climate change amplify the **need for more water storage**.

Promising Strategies

Coordinated efforts between public agencies	Local water supply diversification projects
Native water management practices	Sustainable groundwater management

Regional Themes: **Clean and Safe**

Takeaways

- **Aging infrastructure** can impact water quality at the tap.
- **Industrial and agricultural runoff** can contaminate groundwater and surface water sources.
- **Coordination between planning agencies and water managers** is critical to manage the impacts of runoff on local watersheds and communities.
- Areas not covered by a water district typically rely on **private wells that have unknown water quality conditions**.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Promising Strategies

Nature-based solutions for improved watershed health

Community-led education and research initiatives

Regional Themes: **Affordable**

Takeaways

- Some water districts are increasing rates to meet the **rising costs of water management**.
- Low-income communities across the region **struggle to afford these rate increases**.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Promising Strategies

Water rate structures that promote water conservation and affordability

Regional Themes: **Accessible**

Takeaways

- **More funding is needed** to cover the costs of necessary infrastructure upgrades.
- **New infrastructure to provide reliable water access** is needed in some rural parts of the region.

Promising Strategies

Cross-sector
infrastructure
planning

Regional Themes: **Resilient**

Takeaways

- **More investment is needed in adaptive and resilient solutions** to climate and natural hazards, such as earthquakes.
- **Drought, sea level rise, extreme flooding, wildfires, and earthquakes** are all threats to water resiliency in the SCAG region.

Promising Strategies

Resilience and
emergency planning



REGIONAL DATA GAPS AND CHALLENGES

Data Gaps/Tools: **Reliable**

Takeaways

- May be a **gap between how water demand and population projections** are calculated.
- No region-wide summary of the **number and type of water supplies** each water purveyor uses exists.
- Limited data on **groundwater levels** for basins outside of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) requirements.

Key Datasets/Tools

Department of Water Resources (DWR)
State Water Project Delivery Capability Report

DWR Agricultural Land & Water Use Estimates

Urban Water Management Plans

CalMatters 2025 California Water Tracker

Groundwater Sustainability Plans

Data Gaps/Challenges: **Clean and Safe**

Takeaways

- Limited public data on **risks of lead pipes** for residential water distribution.
- Limited data on water quality for **small water systems and domestic wells**
- Limited data on **emerging contaminants** (e.g., PFAS), but is expected to increase.
- Data on **groundwater quality** may be inconsistent, outdated, and inaccessible.
- No data on the **frequency or locations of the delivery of hauled or bottled water** due to poor quality of tap water.

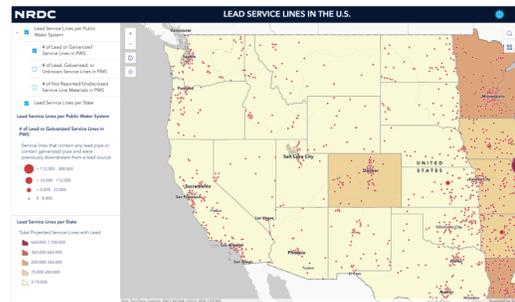
Key Datasets/Tools

SWRCB Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Program Dashboard

SWRCB Risk Assessment Dashboard
Small Water Systems
Domestic Wells

SWRCB's GeoTracker

NRDC/EPA Lead Pipe Interactive Map



Data Gaps/Challenges: Accessible

Takeaways

- Data gaps on the **location and condition of water conveyance infrastructure** throughout the region.
- **Not all agencies have water master plans** documenting age, material, and condition of conveyance infrastructure.
- No public data on **historical water main breaks** or gaps in service.

Key Datasets/Tools

Local Water Master Plans



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Data Gaps/Challenges: Resilient

Takeaways

- No known comprehensive dataset **compares or overlays water infrastructure data with climate hazard datasets** (i.e., data on sea level rise, flooding, wildfire risks).
- Jurisdictions need **support with applying climate models** to their local planning context.

Key Datasets/Tools

Local Water Shortage Contingency Plans

Local Hazard Mitigation Plans

Sea Level Rise Interactive Maps

Wildfire Risk Maps

FEMA Flood Maps

CalAdapt

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CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Key Conclusions

- **More coordination is needed between planning agencies and water managers** to align land use and development planning with water management considerations.
- **More infrastructure funding is needed** to address aging water conveyance and flood control infrastructure, improve the region's resilience to climate change, and support growth.
- While watersheds span county, city, and water district boundaries, **many water management-related datasets are not available or consistent** across the region.
- Member agencies and water districts could use **support with utilizing state or regional datasets** to promote more accurate water supply and demand projections.

Next Steps

- SCAG will use the findings from this phase to identify strategies to support its member jurisdictions with advancing sustainable infrastructure needs in the region.

Contact us with any questions or comments:

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SCAG Water Resolution White Paper

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2022, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Council adopted a Water Action Resolution that called for regional collaboration “to address the region’s water challenges and catalyze opportunities to ensure a clean, safe, affordable, and reliable water supply for the region.”¹ Connect SoCal 2024, SCAG’s Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, advances the priorities set forth in the resolution. Namely, the plan’s Climate Resilience policies and implementation strategies promote priorities such as sustainable water management, integrated housing and water use planning, and nature-based solutions.

In response to the Water Action Resolution, SCAG developed this Water Resolution White Paper, which provides a preliminary scan of major water management challenges in the region and promising strategies to address them. This memo will help inform SCAG’s future efforts to support member jurisdictions with addressing the region’s most pressing water management issues. Findings in this memo are based on a combination of desk research and interviews with 22 stakeholders from across the region. More specifically, SCAG spoke with the following types of entities reaching the following geographies:

Stakeholder Types:

- State water agency (1)
- Groundwater management agency (1)
- Water districts, including wholesalers and retailers (6)
- Public works/flood control district (2)
- Regional conservation authority (1)
- Community-based organizations (11)

Geographies Reached:

- Statewide (1)
- Regional (1)
- Imperial County (3)
- Los Angeles County (4)
- Orange County (3)
- Riverside County (4)
- San Bernardino County (3)
- Ventura County (3)

Findings in this white paper are organized into five sections that align with five indicators for water equity: Reliable, Clean and Safe, Affordable, Accessible, and Resilient. These five indicators (defined in each section) align with California’s Water Code, which states that “every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water...”² They also align with the US Water Alliance’s inclusion of resilience in its Pillars of Water Equity.³ The white paper concludes with a short discussion of next steps for SCAG.

¹ Southern California Association of Governments. (2024, April 4). Connect SoCal 2024. Land Use & Communities. Retrieved February 4, 2025 from <https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/23-2987-tr-landuse-communities-final-040424.pdf>

² California State Water Resources Control Board. (n.d.). Human Right to Water Portal. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/hr2w/

³ US Water Alliance. (n.d.). Water Equity Network. <https://uswateralliance.org/programs/water-equity-network/>

II. KEY WATER MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN THE REGION

Water is central to the future growth of the SCAG region. SCAG estimates that there will be an additional two million people living in the region by 2050 (as compared to 2019), and that the region will need additional housing to address current shortages and future need.⁴ Some counties are also experiencing major growth in water-intensive industries due to the mining of local resources such as lithium.⁵ With increased population, housing production, and industrial growth, agencies overseeing housing development, land use planning, and water management will need to coordinate to ensure that water supply and conveyance infrastructure can keep pace with growing demand.

Due to the number of water management entities in the region, increased collaboration within and across counties will require careful coordination. The six-county SCAG region contains hundreds of water agencies—including regulatory agencies, public and private utilities, groundwater management agencies, flood control districts, and more. These agencies are tasked with ensuring that there is an adequate supply of clean water and with managing runoff. Water purveyors rely on a variety of water sources—from imported water from the State Water Project and the Colorado River to groundwater from local aquifers. Water portfolios differ between counties, but also within counties and across local water districts, adding to the complexity of the water management network. Despite this complexity, there is not a unifying, regional vision for water management. This points to an opportunity for regional collaboration.

Meanwhile, water managers are dealing with ongoing and nascent challenges to water reliability, quality, affordability, accessibility, and resilience that require more collaboration and funding to advance integrated strategies. Climate change threatens both imported and local water resources, increasing the uncertainty of the water supply and, at times, requiring coordination across district and county lines to distribute water to areas in need. Water agencies also must grapple with varied histories of industrial pollution and groundwater over-extraction, which affect the viability of some local water sources and require new technologies to mitigate their impacts. Many local jurisdictions are looking to strategies that can address polluted runoff while also storing water during extreme wet periods for use in dry ones—a cycle that is expected to become more frequent with climate change. Lastly, some districts are also in the process of updating their water conveyance infrastructure to replace aging pipes and improve network resilience to seismic and climate hazards. To address these challenges, additional funding will be required. In particular, the \$3.8 billion in funding dedicated to drought, flooding, and water supply in the recently approved State Proposition 4 presents an opportunity for Southern California agencies to collaborate to secure sizable funds for the region.⁶

SCAG's focus on regional coordination and its strength as a convener position the agency to support collaboration among the numerous planning and water management entities working to address these multi-faceted issues in the region. The following sections explore the challenges detailed above and identify existing strategies that can inform SCAG's future work.

⁴ Southern California Association of Governments. (n.d.). Connect SoCal 2024 Fact Sheet. Retrieved February 4, 2025 from https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/23-2987-connect-socal-2024_factsheet-general-adopted_final-web.pdf?1712168819

⁵ New Report Highlights the Promise of Lithium Valley. (2023, November 29). Resources for California. <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2023/11/28/new-report-highlights-the-promise-of-lithium-valley/>

⁶ The California Legislature's Nonpartisan Fiscal and Policy Advisor. (2024, November 5). Proposition 4. <https://www.lao.ca.gov/BallotAnalysis/Proposition?number=4&year=2024>

A. Reliable

Water reliability considers the number of water sources and the reliability of each source to which a jurisdiction or water service area has access. This section describes findings from interviews and supplemental desk research related to water reliability.

Increased demand from anticipated residential and industrial growth may strain limited water supplies, requiring increased coordination between water managers and local planning agencies.

Interviewed water district representatives emphasized the importance of coordination between water managers and local jurisdictions in planning for anticipated residential and industrial growth to ensure that water supply can meet demand.⁷

⁸ Several counties in the SCAG region are experiencing rapid population growth and are projected to experience more population growth in the coming decades, such as Riverside and San Bernardino counties.⁹ ¹⁰ Water districts are taking this population growth into account in their water demand forecasting. One water district interviewee cited the agency's plans to provide the necessary water infrastructure to meet growing population demands.¹¹

Several counties are also experiencing growth in new, water-intensive industries. For example, there is a rise in geothermal and lithium mining in and around the Salton Sea, a terminal lake that spans Imperial and Riverside counties and is located in an area with enough lithium for 375 million electric-vehicle batteries.¹² Lithium and geothermal mining are anticipated to require significant quantities of water for operations.¹³ ¹⁴ Other counties have also seen growth in water-intensive industries, such as biotechnology in Ventura County and artificial intelligence (AI) servers in San Bernardino County.¹⁵ ¹⁶ ¹⁷ As these examples demonstrate, industrial and residential growth will require coordination between planners and water managers to align water supplies with demand.

Reliance on a limited number of water sources is increasing pressure for local water agencies to diversify water supplies to respond to climate change. Climate change threatens the reliability of both imported and local water resources. Many water districts in the region rely on imported water from the State Water Project or Colorado River as their main source of water. Research demonstrates that these imported sources are vulnerable to climate hazards, such as drought.¹⁸ In individual interviews, water districts shared their concerns about the impact of climate change on the reliability of their imported water

⁷ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁸ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁹ Governor Gavin Newsom. (n.d.). California's Population is Increasing. [https://www.gov.ca.gov/2024/04/30/californias-population-is-increasing/#:~:text=Five%20counties%20had%20growth%20above,percent\)%20due%20to%20housing%20gains](https://www.gov.ca.gov/2024/04/30/californias-population-is-increasing/#:~:text=Five%20counties%20had%20growth%20above,percent)%20due%20to%20housing%20gains)

¹⁰ *County Profile*. (n.d.). San Bernardino County Community Indicators. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://indicators.sbcounty.gov/county-profile/>

¹¹ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

¹² New Report Highlights the Promise of Lithium Valley. (2023, November 29). Resources for California. <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2023/11/28/new-report-highlights-the-promise-of-lithium-valley/>

¹³ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

¹⁴ Wilson, J., & Rode, E. (2022, May 14). Lithium Valley: A look at the major players near the Salton Sea seeking billions in funding. *Desert Sun*. <https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/2022/05/13/lithium-valley-look-major-players-near-salton-sea-seeking-billions-funding/9665978002/>

¹⁵ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

¹⁶ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

¹⁷ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

¹⁸ James, I. (2024, July 31). *State Water Project supplies could fall up to 23% within 20 years due to climate change*. Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2024-07-31/california-water-supplies-will-shrink-over-the-next-20-year>

sources in the coming years.¹⁹ Counties that rely on local groundwater are also facing challenges with climate change affecting the reliability of this source.^{20 21 22 23} For example, a water district interviewee shared that drought is impacting groundwater levels and requiring the district to consider supplemental water resources.²⁴ Because of the impact of climate change on the reliability of both imported and local water sources, water districts are focusing on and investing in a combination of strategies, such as stormwater capture, water recycling, and groundwater recharge, to diversify their water portfolios.

Extreme wet and dry periods due to climate change amplify the need for more water storage to capture rainwater during wet years and support water availability during dry periods. Water districts are considering more water storage opportunities to mitigate the effects of climate change on water reliability. In an individual interview, a water district that relies on water from the State Water Project shared the importance of having more storage at the state level.²⁵ Other districts are hoping to capture water locally during periods of heavy precipitation as a means of water banking and/or of flood mitigation. Water district representatives from numerous counties shared that they are considering local water storage infrastructure—including groundwater recharge and nature-based solutions—to be prepared for periods of drought.^{26 27 28} For example, Los Angeles County is investing in multi-benefit stormwater capture projects through its Safe Clean Water program, which funds projects that mitigate flooding, collect runoff, and provide other community benefits.²⁹ Through these investments, water districts are recognizing the importance of water storage projects for increasing the reliability of their water supplies.

Existing Regional Strategies to Address Reliability Challenges

This section describes examples of regional strategies that agencies have or are in the process of implementing to address the challenges described above. These strategies can help inform SCAG's future work to support sustainable water management efforts in the region.

- **Coordinated efforts between public agencies:** Coordination and collaboration between water managers and local planning entities is essential for water supply planning. Some examples of coordination and collaboration between government agencies include:
 - **Imperial County:** To address recent Colorado River shortages, the Imperial Irrigation District has entered into short- and long-term water conservation

¹⁹ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

²⁰ *The GWRS meets the need.* (n.d.). Orange County Water District. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from

<https://www.ocwd.com/gwrs/the-need/>

²¹ *About the Water Department.* (n.d.). City of San Bernardino Water Department. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from

<https://sbmwd.org/221/About-the-Water-Department>

²² *Groundwater.* (n.d.). County of Ventura. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://egeneralplan.vcrma.org/chapter/groundwater/>

²³ *Item F – Water Supply and Infrastructure Projects in the Oxnard and Pleasant Valley Basins.* (2021, May 19). Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency. https://s42135.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/20210519_OpsComm_ItemF.pdf

²⁴ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

²⁵ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

²⁶ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

²⁷ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

²⁸ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

²⁹ *Safe Clean Water Program.* (2024, October 1). Safe Clean Water LA. <https://safecleanwaterla.org/>

agreements facilitated by the Department of the Interior.³⁰ These short-term conservation strategies will conserve 700,000 acre-feet of water in the Lake Mead reservoir through 2026.³¹ There is already evidence that these conservation agreements are succeeding, with Imperial Irrigation District demonstrating the potential to use its lowest amount of Colorado River water allocation since 1941.³²

- Los Angeles County: The LA County Water Plan is a collaborative effort between multiple public agencies and community stakeholders and looks at regional water supply reliability, groundwater management and quality, at-risk system resilience and drinking water equity, and watershed sediment management.³³ The plan takes a “birds-eye” view on water management efforts in the county and, rather than propose new efforts, makes recommendations on what must be done to leverage and align existing activities.³⁴
- Riverside County: The Riverside County Water Task Force regularly convenes Western Water, the Eastern Municipal Water District, and the Western Riverside Council of Governments.³⁵ The Task Force’s meeting topics range from presentations from water experts to funding opportunities and important legislation happening at the state and federal levels.³⁶
- **Integrated water management and development policy**: The state of California adopted a statewide green building code, known as CALGreen, to promote sustainable construction practices, which include water conservation and efficiency.³⁷ Locally, cities in the region have explored the implementation of water neutral development ordinances to manage water demand alongside new development. For example, in 2017, the City of Santa Monica adopted a Water Neutrality Ordinance, which requires new buildings to comply with standards aimed at ensuring that new development does not increase water demand for the city.³⁸ The City of Ventura previously had a similar water neutral policy in place, which aimed to address water demand from new development.³⁹

³⁰ *Biden-Harris Administration Marks Major Progress for Colorado River System Health, Signs Five New Water Conservation Agreements* | U.S. Department of the Interior. (2024, September 25). [Press Release]. <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/biden-harris-administration-marks-major-progress-colorado-river-system-health-signs>

³¹ *Biden-Harris Administration Marks Major Progress for Colorado River System Health, Signs Five New Water Conservation Agreements* | U.S. Department of the Interior. (2024, September 25). [Press Release]. <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/biden-harris-administration-marks-major-progress-colorado-river-system-health-signs>

³² Fleck, J. (2024, September 9). Imperial Irrigation District’s water use on track for a record low, as is US Lower Basin use. *Jfleck at Inkstain*. <https://www.inkstain.net/2024/09/imperial-irrigation-districts-water-use-on-track-for-a-record-low-as-is-us-lower-basin-use/>

³³ *LA County Water Plan: Our Route to Resilience Together*. (n.d.). Los Angeles County Public Works. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://lacountywaterplan.org/>

³⁴ *LA County Water Plan: CWP Strategies*. (n.d.). Los Angeles County Public Works. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://lacountywaterplan.org/>

³⁵ *Riverside County Water Task Force*. (n.d.). Western Municipal Water District. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://westernwaterca.gov/535/Riverside-County-Water-Task-Force>

³⁶ *Riverside County Water Task Force*. (n.d.). Western Municipal Water District. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://westernwaterca.gov/535/Riverside-County-Water-Task-Force>

³⁷ California Department of Housing and Community Development. (n.d.). CALGreen. California Department of Housing and Community Development. Retrieved February 25, 2025, from <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/building-standards/calgreen>

³⁸ *Water Self-Sufficiency* (n.d.). City of Santa Monica. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://www.santamonica.gov/water-self-sufficiency#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20Water%20Neutrality,of%20water%20used%20City%2Dwide>

³⁹ *Net Zero*. (n.d.). Ventura Water. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/905/Net-Zero>

- **Recycled water projects:** Several counties have turned to recycled water projects to reduce reliance on imported water supplies and increase local water supply reliability. Some examples of these projects are:
 - Los Angeles County: The Metropolitan Water District and Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts are partnering on Pure Water Southern California, a regional wastewater recycling program that, once completed, will create up to 150 million gallons of water each day.⁴⁰
 - Orange County: Moulton Niguel Water District is in the process of developing the OASIS Water Resource Center, which will recycle residential and commercial water for irrigation and potentially for direct reuse in homes and businesses.⁴¹
 - Riverside County: Western Municipal Water District's Recycling Facility can treat up to three million gallons of wastewater per day and provides recycled water for irrigation to local cemeteries, golf courses, schools, and parks.⁴² Eastern Municipal Water District has four regional treatment plants that treat over 49 million gallons of wastewater and distribute this water through 260 miles of pipelines to be used for irrigation purposes within their service area.⁴³
- **Groundwater replenishment projects:** Some groundwater managers are investing in recharge projects to help replenish groundwater supplies by infiltrating water from the surface into underground aquifers.⁴⁴ These projects will contribute to managing groundwater storage systems effectively. Some examples of these projects include:
 - Los Angeles County: The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power partnered with the Los Angeles County Flood Control District on the Tujunga Spreading Grounds Enhancement Project.⁴⁵ This project, which spans 150 acres, is designed to recharge local groundwater supplies.
 - Orange County: The Orange County Water District's Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) treats wastewater for indirect potable reuse through recharge throughout the Orange County groundwater basin.⁴⁶
 - San Bernardino County: The San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District's Enhanced Recharge Project aims to increase groundwater recharge capacity, create 337.4 acres of new recharge basins, and provide an additional 10,807

⁴⁰ *Pure Water Southern California: Program Benefits.* (January 24, 2024). Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. https://www.mwdh2o.com/media/wrfpnkwl/purewater_programbenefits_01242024-web.pdf

⁴¹ Moulton Niguel Water District. (n.d.). *OASIS Water Resource Center*. Retrieved October 30, 2024, from <https://www.mnwd.com/oasis/>

⁴² *Western Water Recycling Facility (WWRF).* (n.d.). Western Municipal Water District. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://westernwaterca.gov/187/Western-Water-Recycling-Facility-WWRF>

⁴³ *Recycled Water Service.* (2024). Eastern Municipal Water District - EMWD. <https://www.emwd.org/recycled-water>

⁴⁴ California Department of Water Resources. (n.d.). *Groundwater Recharge*. Retrieved February 4, 2025, from <https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Groundwater-Recharge>

⁴⁵ *Tujunga Spreading Grounds Enhancement Project.* (n.d.). Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://www.ladwp.com/community/construction-projects/other/tujunga-spreading-grounds-enhancement-project>

⁴⁶ Orange County Water District. *Groundwater Replenishment System*. Retrieved February 26, 2025 from <https://www.ocwd.com/gwrs/>

acre-feet of water a year.⁴⁷ The San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District also broke ground on the Weavers Basin to store recycled water with the potential to replenish Bunker Hill Basin with 10 million gallons of recycled water a day.⁴⁸

- **Multi-benefit, nature-based stormwater projects:** Stormwater capture projects offer multiple benefits, including rain capture, water filtration, and urban greening. LA County Department of Public Works implemented the Elmer Avenue Project—a multi-benefit project in Sun Valley that includes water conservation strategies on both private and public property, such as rain barrels, bioswales, permeable pavers, and underground filtration.⁴⁹ Additionally, in San Bernardino County, the Cactus Basin project will mitigate increased stormwater flow and recharge groundwater basins, while also providing trails and bike lanes accessible to the public.⁵⁰
- **Native water management practices:** Native water management practices can provide helpful insight for addressing the region’s challenges. A CBO interviewee shared that tribal knowledge is essential to their water advocacy work, and that their tribal partners lead seminars and workshops on effective and holistic water management practices to support community organizations and local jurisdictions.⁵¹

B. Clean and Safe

Clean and safe water translates to the quality of water for purposes such as human consumption, cooking, and sanitation. The quality of water delivered is affected by the source water, treatment methods, and the material, age, and operations of the applicable conveyance and delivery systems. Clean and safe also refers to the quality of environmental water. This section describes findings from interviews and supplemental desk research related to water cleanliness and safety.

Ageing infrastructure and untreated water impact the quality of local water supplies.

Poor water quality due to different sources of contamination is a concern and priority for communities, community-based organizations (CBOs), and water districts across the SCAG region. One concern is referred to as “premise plumbing,” where the water at the source is clean, but the plumbing itself, likely due to aging municipal and residential water pipes, contaminates the drinking water.⁵² ⁵³ Interviewed CBOs shared that the communities they work with, many of whom are low-income, have expressed concerns about premise plumbing due to the poor tap water they receive in their homes.⁵⁴ Interviewed water district

⁴⁷ *Enhanced Recharge Project*. (n.d.). San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://www.sbvmd.com/about-us/projects/enhanced-recharge-project-phase-1a>

⁴⁸ *Weavers Basins Under Construction*. (n.d.). San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District. <https://eastvalley.org/DocumentCenter/View/2921/Weaver-Basins-Project-Facts?bidId=>

⁴⁹ *Sun Valley Watershed | Elmer Avenue Neighborhood Retrofit*. (n.d.). Los Angeles County Public Works. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://pw.lacounty.gov/wmd/svw/elmeravenue>

⁵⁰ *CACTUS BASINS NO. 4 & 5*. (2023, December 29). San Bernardino County Public Works. <https://dpw.sbcounty.gov/news/cactus-basins-no-4-5/>

⁵¹ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁵² *Causes and Effects of Lead in Water*. (2024, October 8). Natural Resources Defense Council. <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/causes-and-effects-lead-water>

⁵³ Villegas, K., Flores, P., Ho, C., McGuire, C., Goldman, M., Rubin, E., McKensie, L., Hodge, D., & Hiemstra, R. (2023). *Communities Organizing for Better Water: Policy Brief*. Orange County Environmental Justice. <https://www.ocej.org/cobw>

⁵⁴ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

representatives recognized the importance and need to upgrade their existing plumbing infrastructure but cited funding as a significant barrier to these upgrades.⁵⁵

Some residents in Imperial County utilize untreated canal water for certain purposes, which poses water quality issues for these residents if consumed without proper treatment. As part of the terms of use for canal water, the local water district requires these rural homes to have a contract with a bulk or bottled water delivery service in accordance with the Safe Drinking Water Acts.⁵⁶ Residents are required to coordinate these services, with financial discounts from the Imperial Irrigation District to help with the delivery costs for customers who qualify.⁵⁷ Interviewed CBO representatives expressed concerns about the quality of untreated canal water, as many families still use it to wash dishes or bathe.⁵⁸

Industrial and agricultural runoff negatively impact drinking water supplies in several parts of the region; this runoff can also have broader implications for local watersheds and communities, requiring coordination between planning agencies and water managers.

Another major source of water contamination comes from runoff from local industries. Interviewed CBOs across multiple counties shared that urban runoff from local industry, such as manufacturing, contaminates groundwater and surface water sources,⁵⁹ some of these contaminants include per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), arsenic, and Chromium-6, which have been shown to cause cancer and other serious chronic illnesses.⁶⁰ ⁶¹ ⁶² Water districts in Orange County are addressing some of these pollutants through investments in technologies to remove PFAS and other contaminants from drinking water.⁶³ ⁶⁴ Additionally, CBO interviewees shared concerns about runoff from the agricultural industry.⁶⁵ They emphasized the importance of stronger enforcement of regulations over pesticide use to minimize impacts on local watersheds.

In addition to its impact on drinking water supplies, agricultural runoff can also affect local watersheds and communities. A prominent example of this is the Salton Sea. The Salton Sea's main water source is agricultural runoff.⁶⁶ Efforts to reduce agricultural water use, such as fallowing (coordination between water managers and farmers to shut off irrigation

⁵⁵ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁵⁶ *Safe Drinking Water Act | Imperial Irrigation District.* (n.d.). Imperial Irrigation District. Retrieved October 30, 2024, from <https://www.iid.com/water/service-pipe-customers/safe-drinking-water-act>

⁵⁷ *Safe Drinking Water Act | Imperial Irrigation District.* (n.d.). Imperial Irrigation District. Retrieved October 30, 2024, from <https://www.iid.com/water/service-pipe-customers/safe-drinking-water-act>

⁵⁸ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁵⁹ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁶⁰ Bartell, S. M. (2023, April 26). Bridging the Gap: The Health Effects of Forever Chemicals in Our Drinking Water. UC Irvine Joe C. Wen School of Population and Public Health. <https://publichealth.uci.edu/2023/04/26/bridging-the-gap-the-health-effects-of-forever-chemicals-in-our-drinking-water/>

⁶¹ Brogan, M. (2024, April 3). *EPA Actions Restore Safe Drinking Water to over 900 Mobile Home Park Residents in Eastern Coachella Valley* (Tribal Lands, California) [News Release]. United States Environmental Protection Agency. <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-actions-restore-safe-drinking-water-over-900-mobile-home-park-residents-eastern-coachella-valley>

⁶² California State Water Resources Control Board. (2024, August 16). *Hexavalent Chromium (Chromium-6)*. Hexavalent Chromium (Chromium-6). https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/Chromium6.html

⁶³ Huang, P. (2024, September 12). How a California county got PFAS out of its drinking water. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2024/09/12/g-s1-22291/pfas-drinking-water-filter>

⁶⁴ *Santa Ana PFAS Water Treatment Plant Wells.* (n.d.). Orange County Water District. Retrieved October 30, 2024, from <https://www.ocwd.com/working-with-us/rfp-contracts/santa-ana-pfas-water-treatment-plant-wells/>

⁶⁵ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁶⁶ Bittle, J. (2022, September 13). *Fallowing fields saves water, but there's a cost.* *Grist*. Retrieved October 30, 2024, from <https://grist.org/parched/fallowing-fields-saves-water-but-theres-a-cost/>

for certain crops over a specified period), have lowered the Salton Sea’s levels.⁶⁷ Lowered sea levels have exposed seabed dust, which has become toxic from decades of accumulated agricultural runoff. This dust has been associated with higher rates of asthma among members of nearby communities, many of which are low-income communities of color.^{68 69 70} Due to these public health impacts and the impact of falling on local farmworker jobs, interviewed CBO representatives underscored the importance of balancing water conservation goals with strategies to address health and economic impacts in their communities.

Existing Regional Strategies to Address Challenges with Clean and Safe Water

This section describes examples of regional strategies that agencies have or are in the process of implementing to address the challenges described above. These strategies can help inform SCAG’s future work to support sustainable water management efforts in the region.

- **Emerging contaminant treatment technologies:** Water districts are investing in technologies that address PFAS in local drinking water supplies. For example, Orange County Water District is a leader in this area; the agency already removes PFAS in some of its operations, including the Groundwater Replenishment System.⁷¹ The agency is expanding its work in this area and recently put out a call for bids to develop a PFAS treatment center.⁷² The City of Yorba Linda also built a PFAS treatment center with 22 tanks that hold 4,500 gallons of water and provide treated water to 80,000 people.⁷³
- **Nature-based solutions that address water quality:** In addition to supporting water storage and flood mitigation, nature-based solutions can also promote improved water quality in creeks, rivers, the ocean, and other natural water bodies.⁷⁴ Entities in several counties are using nature-based solutions to help address their water and climate challenges. For example, the Safe Clean Water Program in Los Angeles County generates approximately \$285 million per year through a special tax and funds projects, studies, and educational programs that capture water and promote improved water quality.⁷⁵ As an additional example, the CBO-led Surfrider Ocean Friendly Garden program in Ventura County provides guidance on how

⁶⁷ *Quantification Settlement Agreement*. (2020, June 22). Water Education Foundation.

<https://www.watereducation.org/aquapedia/quantification-settlement-agreement>

⁶⁸ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁶⁹ Peterson, M. (2024, July 25). *Boiling Point: The Salton Sea Lithium Rush*. Los Angeles Times.

<https://www.latimes.com/environment/newsletter/2024-07-25/boiling-point-salton-sea-lithium-rush-boiling-point>

⁷⁰ Gewin, V. (2024, December 9). *Farm Runoff May Be Tied to Respiratory Illness Near the Salton Sea*. Civil Eats.

<https://civileats.com/2024/12/09/farm-runoff-may-be-tied-to-respiratory-illness-near-the-salton-sea/>

⁷¹ Orange County Water District. (n.d.). Frequently Asked Questions. Retrieved February 26, 2025 from <https://www.ocwd.com/what-we-do/water-quality/pfas/faq/>

⁷² *Santa Ana PFAS Water Treatment Plant Wells*. (n.d.). Orange County Water District. Retrieved October 30, 2024, from

<https://www.ocwd.com/working-with-us/rfp-contracts/santa-ana-pfas-water-treatment-plant-wells/>

⁷³ Huang, P. (2024, September 12). How a California county got PFAS out of its drinking water. *NPR*.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2024/09/12/g-s1-22291/pfas-drinking-water-filter>

⁷⁴ Duke University, Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment & Sustainability. (2025, January 14). Nature-Based Solutions.

<https://nicholasinstitute.duke.edu/issues/nature-based-solutions>

⁷⁵ *Safe Clean Water Program*. (2024, October 1). Safe Clean Water LA. <https://safecleanwaterla.org/>

residents can plant gardens that use native plants and other water conservation strategies to reduce water runoff and filter pollutants.⁷⁶

- **Community-led education and research initiatives:** Communities are leading clean water initiatives or campaigns that focus on advocacy and community education on water quality and health issues. For example, Orange County Environmental Justice’s Communities Organizing for Better Water campaign focuses on addressing and raising awareness about water inequality in the county through a community-based, research model.⁷⁷

C. Affordable

Water affordability refers to the portion of household median income allocated to paying for water. Low affordability of water means that communities pay a relatively high cost for water. This may disproportionately impact income-constrained communities. This section describes findings from interviews and supplemental desk research related to water affordability.

Low-income communities across the SCAG region are struggling to afford rising water rates due to the increased costs of water management. The cost of water management has increased for water districts, due to factors such as increased water quality regulations.⁷⁸ An interviewed water district representative shared that their district has had to increase water utility rates to keep up with the rising costs of managing water supplies.⁷⁹ Interviewed representatives from CBOs emphasized the disproportionate financial impacts increased rates have on low-income communities, who may struggle to cover increases in their water bills.⁸⁰ While residents may be aware of subsidies to support paying for electrical bills, one CBO representative shared that more education regarding monthly discount programs for water is needed for qualifying families.⁸¹ As water districts invest in new technologies to meet regulatory standards, they will also need to consider strategies to address the financial impacts on their low-income customers.

Existing Regional Strategies to Address Affordability Challenges

This section describes examples of regional strategies that agencies have or are in the process of implementing to address the challenges described above. These strategies can help inform SCAG’s future work to support sustainable water management efforts in the region.

- **Water rate structures that promote water conservation and affordability:** To help address concerns with water rate affordability, water districts are employing innovative rate structures that anticipate water demand. Moulton Niguel Water District, Western Water Municipal Water District, and others use a budget-based water rate system that calculates efficient water use for a household based on anticipated need, where customers whose water use stays within their allocated

⁷⁶ *Ocean Friendly Gardens*. (n.d.). Surfrider Foundation. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://www.surfrider.org/programs/ocean-friendly-gardens>

⁷⁷ *Communities Organizing for Better Water*. (2018). Orange County Environmental Justice. <https://www.ocej.org/cobw>

⁷⁸ James, I. (2024, March 12). As water rates climb, many are struggling to pay for an essential service. Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2024-03-12/as-water-rates-soar-legislators-look-for-assistance>

⁷⁹ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁸⁰ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁸¹ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

budget pay lower rates.^{82 83} “Need” can be calculated based on a combination of factors, such as landscaped area, household members, and localized weather conditions.

D. Accessible

Access to water refers to the presence and condition of water conveyance and flood control infrastructure. Areas that have aging infrastructure that may lead to water main breaks or that lack existing or comprehensive distribution networks would be considered to have lower accessibility. This section describes findings from interviews and supplemental desk research related to water accessibility.

Funding the costs of needed upgrades to aging water conveyance and flood control infrastructure is challenging, especially for small water systems that have limited funding capacity. Due to the vulnerability of aging infrastructure to climate hazards and the effect of some aging pipes (e.g., lead pipes) on water quality, it is imperative to upgrade aging infrastructure to ensure communities have reliable access to water and have reliable stormwater infrastructure. However, doing so is costly, and several interviewed representatives from water districts and planning agencies cited obtaining the necessary funding to cover the costs of infrastructure upgrades as one of their biggest challenges. For example, an interviewed County representative shared that because the flood control district’s funding structure is tied to each area’s tax base, there is often limited funding for much-needed stormwater infrastructure upgrades in low-income areas.⁸⁴ Additionally, an interviewed groundwater management agency noted that securing funding for needed upgrades can be challenging because it often competes with funding for capital improvements.⁸⁵

The challenge of securing funding for necessary infrastructure upgrades is felt most heavily by small water systems due to their limited funding and staff capacity. Research shows that because of their limited revenue and staff resources, small water systems struggle with infrastructure maintenance more than larger water systems.^{86 87 88} Therefore, it is important to provide funding support to small water districts.

New infrastructure is needed in some rural parts of the region to provide reliable water access for historically disinvested communities. Some rural and low-income communities have limited access to water infrastructure. For example, some communities in Imperial County rely on untreated canal water for non-potable uses, as noted above.

⁸² Moulton Niguel Water District. (n.d.). Water Budget Based Rates. *Understanding Your Water Budget*. Retrieved October 30, 2024, from <https://www.mnwd.com/waterbudgetbasedrates/>

⁸³ Water Budgets | Western Municipal Water District, CA. (n.d.). Retrieved February 4, 2025, from <https://westernwaterca.gov/WaterBudget>

⁸⁴ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁸⁵ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁸⁶ California Water Resources Control Board. (n.d.). Strategy for State Small Water Systems, Domestic Wells and Other Self-Supplied Communities. Retried October 31, 2024.

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/safer/ssws_dw.html#:~:text=State%20small%20water%20systems%20pipe,people%20on%20a%20regular%20basis.

⁸⁷ California State Water Resources Control Board. (2021). *2021 Needs Assessment Executive Summary*. California State Water Resources Control Board.

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/documents/needs/2024/2024naexecutivesummary.pdf

⁸⁸ Bardeen, S. (2021, November 15). *Consolidating Small Water Systems Is a Springboard to Water Justice*. Public Policy Institute of California. <https://www.pplic.org/blog/consolidating-small-water-systems-is-a-springboard-to-water-justice/>

Interviewed representatives from CBOs also shared that many trailer park communities (called “Polanco Parks”) in rural Riverside County do not have sufficient water infrastructure.⁸⁹ Polanco Parks, which are typically occupied by farmworker communities, have a legacy of disinvestment.⁹⁰ ⁹¹ Funding is needed to support the construction of new water conveyance infrastructure, especially in historically disinvested communities in the region.

Existing Regional Strategies to Address Accessibility Challenges

This section describes examples of regional strategies that agencies have or are in the process of implementing to address the challenges described above. These strategies can help inform SCAG’s future work to support sustainable water management efforts in the region.

- **Cross-sector infrastructure planning:** The Coachella Valley Water District’s (CVWD’s) Disadvantaged Communities Infrastructure Task Force is an interdisciplinary body made up of representatives from Coachella Valley Water District, CBOs, elected officials’ offices, and government agencies.⁹² The group has successfully secured \$100 million in funding for several infrastructure projects that will provide reliable clean drinking water and sewage waste systems for the Eastern Coachella Valley, which is home to many Polanco Parks and trailer parks.⁹³

E. Resilient

Resilience refers to the ability for a community or water source to “bounce back” from climate change impacts such as droughts, floods, and sea level rise, as well as earthquakes or other disasters. This section describes findings from interviews and supplemental desk research related to resilience.

With more extreme climate impacts projected, there is a need to invest in adaptive and resilient solutions to climate and other natural hazards. To support adaptation and resilience to climate risks, investments in climate resilient water management strategies are needed. As previously discussed, water districts have shared that climate hazards such as drought and wildfires, and other natural hazards such as earthquakes, affect their service areas and infrastructure.⁹⁴ ⁹⁵ To ensure that their water supply is available during these crisis periods, water districts are assessing how best to prepare for these hazards. One water district interviewee shared that the district is investing in emergency planning and infrastructure upgrades to support their ability to provide uninterrupted water supply during local fires and that their water storage is resilient to earthquakes.⁹⁶ As the region braces for

⁸⁹ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁹⁰ Mendez, C. (2015, September 10). *Drinking the Fruits of Their Labor: Accessing Potable Water in the Eastern Coachella Valley*. PBS SoCal. <https://www.pbssocal.org/shows/departures/drinking-the-fruits-of-their-labor-accessing-potable-water-in-the-eastern-coachella-valley>

⁹¹ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁹² *Disadvantaged Communities Infrastructure Task Force*. (n.d.). Coachella Valley Water District. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from <https://www.cvwd.org/365/Disadvantaged-Communities-Task-Force>

⁹³ *CVWD celebrates \$100 million in grants for underserved Eastern Valley communities*. (2024, April 5). Coachella Valley Water District. <https://www.cvwd.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=460>

⁹⁴ *SoCal Water District Receives \$2.8M to Protect Infrastructure After an Earthquake* | FEMA.gov. (2021, March 18). FEMA.gov. <https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20210318/socal-water-district-receives-28m-protect-infrastructure-after-earthquake>

⁹⁵ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

⁹⁶ Source: Stakeholder Interviews

more climate extremes and projected seismic activity, water districts will continue to plan for and implement strategies to shore up their existing infrastructure.

Existing Regional Strategies to Address Resilience Challenges

This section describes examples of regional strategies that agencies have or are in the process of implementing to address the challenges described above. These strategies can help inform SCAG's future work to support sustainable water management efforts in the region.

- **Planning and investments in wildfire resilience strategies:** To promote preparedness in the event of a wildfire, Moulton Niguel Water District developed its Emergency Preparedness Program, which focuses on ensuring water reliability during a fire event. The district is also investing in improvements to increase its resilience to wildfires.⁹⁷ These include investments in water conveyance infrastructure, fire hydrants, and backup generators.
- **Wildfire resilience educational resources:** In addition to planning for and investing in strategies that promote resilience, Moulton Niguel also provides free educational resources to their customers to further promote wildfire resilience across their service area. The district has hosted free community workshops on residential home hardening measures to help improve the resilience of the homes within their district to wildfires and to help mitigate contaminated runoff from flowing into water systems after a fire.⁹⁸

III. NEXT STEPS

SCAG will share a high-level summary of these findings in a series of presentations to regional stakeholders in mid-2025.

⁹⁷ Emergency Preparedness. (n.d.). Moulton Niguel Water District. Retrieved May 13, 2025 from <https://www.mnwd.com/emergencypreparedness/>

⁹⁸ Moulton Niguel Water District. (2022, June 8). Moulton Niguel Water Remains Safe & Clean. *June 2022 Newsletter*. <https://www.mnwd.com/june-2022-newsletter-moulton-niguel-water-remains-safe-clean/>