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ORGANIZATIONS

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Questions and Answers about the Southern California Association of Governments



MISSION STATEMENT

"To enhance the quality of life of all Southern Californians by working in partnership with all levels of government, the business sector, and the community at large to meet regional challenges and to resolve regional differences."

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



ASSOCIATION OF
GOVERNMENTS

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What is the Southern California Association of Governments?

- SCAG is a voluntary association of cities and counties formed by a "joint powers agreement". SCAG is not a government organization with land use, taxing or regulatory powers. SCAG has reaffirmed this local government approach to regional decision-making at its last 3 annual General Assemblies.

What does SCAG do?

- SCAG prepares regional policies and regional action plans that address issues that cross city and county boundaries such as transportation, air quality, housing, growth, hazardous waste and water quality.
- The SCAG region includes 184 cities and the six counties of Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Imperial.

What is the Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide?

- The Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide is a resource tool that provides a comprehensive overview of the region and its interrelated metropolitan service systems. The document identifies key issues facing the region. It also provides strategies to address these issues that can be used by cities, counties, subregional organizations, business, other public agencies, non-profit organizations, community groups and individuals.

- The Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide does not tell local government what to do. It does not create additional mandates for cities and counties. It does not reduce or eliminate local government control over land use decisions.

What is SCAG's authority to perform its work?

- SCAG's work is authorized by the Regional Council, SCAG's governing body.
- SCAG is mandated to prepare and maintain regional plans for transportation, air quality, growth management, housing, water quality and hazardous waste under various federal and state laws and designations (Metropolitan Planning Organization and Regional Transportation Planning Agency).
- SCAG has the federal designation as a clearing-house for federal funding of regional projects, and federal and state designation to review regionally significant projects for consistency with regional plans.

Who makes SCAG's decisions?

- SCAG's decisions are made by the Regional Council, SCAG's governing board of mayors, council members and county supervisors from throughout the region. The Regional Council meets monthly. An annual General Assembly of city and county delegates gives general direction to the organization.
- The Regional Council has 71 members representing the 6 counties and 184 cities in the SCAG region. The 7 county representatives are appointed by their boards. The 64 city representatives are elected by their peer mayors and council members to represent groups of cities (districts) with approximately 200,000 people.

Do SCAG's policies/plans affect the authority of cities and counties?

- SCAG does not have regulatory or land-use authority over cities and counties. SCAG is not another layer of government.
- For many years, Federal and state laws have required SCAG to review and comment on the consistency of regionally significant projects with adopted regional plans. If a regional project is determined to be inconsistent, SCAG may suggest adjustments so that the city or county can improve the project. SCAG has no authority to reject projects.

Do SCAG's policies/plans help cities and counties?

- Cities and counties are required by federal and state law to consider the impacts of local development decisions on neighboring communities. SCAG's policies, plans, data, and coordination activities can help cities and counties comply with these legal requirements at a lower cost.
- Federal and state funds continue to be available to cities and counties for infrastructure projects because SCAG has prepared mandated regional plans for transportation, growth management, air quality, water quality and hazardous waste.

How is SCAG funded?

- SCAG's funding comes from federal transportation planning grants, state planning grants and contracts, local grants and contracts, membership dues and member fee services. SCAG's funding is for planning programs, activities and studies. These funds are not available for construction or services purposes.

How are SCAG's funds spent?

- SCAG develops an annual work program. The work program primarily includes those transportation planning activities required by federal and state law. The work program also includes related planning activities and studies required by federal and state law and authorized by the Regional Council. These related planning studies address the overall social, economic and environmental effects of transportation decisions in the region.

How does SCAG perform its work?

- SCAG prepares its regional plans and policies through a "bottom-up" planning process. The process is based on the fundamental belief that community ideas and solutions are the most effective to solve the region's problems.
- A focal point for community input and participation to the regional planning program is through a subregional arrangement. Subregions and their organizations are self-defined groupings of communities such as the San Gabriel Valley Subregion with shared interests and geography.
- Subregional organizations do not duplicate SCAG's role and responsibilities. These organizations are still evolving and they perform a variety of functions, especially as SCAG's partners in developing required regional plans and programs.
- SCAG's staffing level has been maintained at approximately 100 employees for the last 10 years. An increasing proportion of the work is being performed under contract to subregional organizations and private consultants.

How are citizens involved in SCAG's planning activities?

- Citizen review and participation in SCAG's regional planning activities is primarily achieved through the Regional Advisory Council (RAC). The RAC represents a broad range of diverse business, professional, environmental, labor, ethnic, educational, civic, charitable, human service, religious and other community organizations. Information about RAC is available through the SCAG offices.

Why is SCAG responsible for such a large geographical area?

- Southern California is recognized as a region by the federal, state and local governments because it is connected by transportation systems, air quality, economic development and jobs, growth patterns and housing demands.

How is SCAG held accountable?

- SCAG's work is directed and monitored by the Regional Council and its policy committees. ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.
- SCAG provides quarterly progress reports and products to CALTRANS and federal agencies.
- SCAG is audited annually by an independent financial auditor, CALTRANS and FHWA. The audit report is reviewed by the Regional Council and General Assembly.

Regional Council Members

OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT: Supervisor Bob Buster, Riverside

1ST VICE PRESIDENT: Councilmember Dick Kelly, Palm Desert

2ND VICE PRESIDENT: Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Los Angeles County

PAST PRESIDENT: Mayor Stella Mendoza, Brawley

IMPERIAL COUNTY: Supervisor Sam Sharp • Mayor Stella Mendoza, Brawley

LOS ANGELES COUNTY: Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke • Councilmember Richard Alarcon, L.A. • Councilmember Richard Alatorre, L.A. • Mayor Robert Bartlett, Monrovia • Councilmember George Bass, Bell • Councilmember Hal Bemson, L.A. • Councilmember Marvin Braude, L.A. • Mayor Robert Bruesch, Rosemead • Councilmember Laura Chick, L.A. • Councilmember John Crawley, Cerritos • Councilmember Joe Dawidziak, Redondo Beach • Mayor Terry Dipple, San Dimas • Vice Mayor Doug Drummond, Long Beach • Councilmember John Ferraro, L.A. • Councilmember Karyn Foley, Calabasas • Councilmember Ruth Galanter, L.A. • Mayor Eileen Givens, Glendale • Councilmember Jackie Goldberg, L.A. • Councilmember Garland Hardeman, Inglewood • Councilmember Mike Hernandez, L.A. • Councilmember Nate Holden, L.A. • Mayor Abbe Land, West Hollywood • Councilmember Barbara Messina, Alhambra • Mayor Pro Tem David Myers, Palmdale • Mayor Pro Tem George Nakano, Torrance • Councilmember Jenny Oropeza, Long Beach • Mayor Beatrice Proo, Pico Rivera • Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas, L.A. • Mayor Richard Riordan, L.A. • Mayor Albert Robles, South Gate • Councilmember Marcine Shaw, Compton • Councilmember Ray Smith, Bellflower • Councilmember Rudy Svorinich, L.A. • Mayor Pro Tem Tom Sykes, Walnut • Councilmember Joel Wachs, L.A. • Councilmember Rita Walters, L.A. • Councilmember Judy Wright, Claremont

ORANGE COUNTY: Supervisor Marian Bergeson • Councilmember Ron Bates, Los Alamitos • Councilmember Walt Bowman, Cypress • Councilmember Art Brown, Buena Park • Mayor Pro Tem Jan Debay, Newport Beach • Mayor Richard Dixon, Lake Forest • Councilmember Sandra Genis, Costa Mesa • Mayor Candace Haggard, San Clemente • Mayor Bev Perry, Brea

RIVERSIDE COUNTY: Supervisor Bob Buster, Riverside County • Mayor Jeffrey Bennett, City of Corona • Mayor Pro Tem Dennis Draeger, Calimesa • Councilmember Dick Kelly, Palm Desert • Mayor Ron Loveridge, Riverside • Councilmember Ron Parks, Temecula

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY: Supervisor Larry Walker • Mayor Jim Bagley, Twentynine Palms • Mayor Pro Tem Deirdre Bennett, Colton • Mayor David Eshleman, Fontana • Mayor Tom Minor, San Bernardino • Councilmember Gwenn Norton-Perry, Chino Hills • Mayor Larry Rhinehart, Montclair

VENTURA COUNTY: Supervisor Judy Mikels • Councilmember Stan Daily, Camarillo • Mayor Pro Tem John Melton, Santa Paula • Councilmember Scott Montgomery, Moorpark