

Regional Early Action Planning Grants Program of 2021 (REAP 2021)

AB 140 (Chapter 111, Statutes of 2021) established REAP 2021 with approximately \$600 million available statewide. This funding will support transformative and innovative projects that implement a region's SCS and help achieve goals for housing and transportation options that reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). REAP 2021 funds will be provided primarily to metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) such as the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). AB 140 allows for sub-allocation of funds to County Transportation Commissions (CTC) such as the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA). The SCAG region's formula share is estimated to be \$246 million. An initial allocation of ten percent of these funds are available starting January 1, 2022. All funds are to be obligated by June of 2024 and expended by June 2026. The final closeout report is due June 2026.

SCAG intends to use the following set of core objectives for REAP 2021 funds:

- Support transformative planning and implementation activities that realize Connect SoCal objectives,
- Leverage and augment the Connect SoCal Implementation Strategy to support activities that can be implemented quickly and in line with the community-driven, pandemic recovery priorities,
- Build regional capacity to deliver housing that realizes 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) goals,
- Represent best practices in VMT reduction,
- Establish projects that are shovel ready and shovel worthy,
- Demonstrate consistency with SCAG Equity Early Action Plan, and
- Promote infill development in Connect SoCal-identified priority growth areas.

The core objectives noted above were developed in consideration of the 2020 Connect SoCal Implementation Strategy and goals established during the SCAG Executive/Administration Committee Retreat.

SCAG is considering three main programmatic areas for distributing funds and achieving the core objectives. These will be refined and shared for stakeholder discussion pending guidance from the State on program guidelines (anticipated in January 2022). Currently, the programmatic areas include:

1. Early Action Initiatives: SCAG would expand their Sustainable Communities Program call for projects, which funds greenhouse gas (GHG) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT)-reducing planning activities and demonstration projects in local jurisdictions throughout the SCAG region.

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2. CTC Partnership Program: SCAG is anticipated to create a new partnership program with the region's CTC to fund the development of plans, programs, pilot projects, and even some signature GHG/VMT-reducing capital projects. Examples of candidate funding areas include:
 - Mobility as a service/shared mobility,
 - Congestion pricing studies and pilots,
 - Transit recovery and integration pilot projects,
 - Dedicated lanes and other tactical transit solutions to improve transit travel time and reliability,
 - Micro-transit and other mobility-on-demand services providing first/last mile connections, and
 - Regional Advanced Mitigation Program or VMT Mitigation Bank.

SCAG has initiated some early outreach with CTC staff to gauge opportunities for partnership and continued dialogue is anticipated with SCAG in developing the CTC Partnership Program.

3. Housing Supportive Infrastructure Program: SCAG's primary priority of this program element would be investments in utilities (e.g., sewer, gas, electric, broadband, etc.) needed to meet the region's 6th cycle RHNA goals and in the priority growth areas identified in Connect SoCal. SCAG's secondary focus for this program is on parking, in particular, opportunities to develop shared parking and reduce the cost of parking delivery in priority growth areas as well as other housing supportive infrastructure such as open space, community facilities, food markets and childcare facilities. Other components that SCAG is considering for this housing program include promoting wealth building through alternate homeownership models, supporting financing mechanisms to deliver housing, and supporting housing development on publicly owned land.

SCAG's anticipated next steps for REAP 2021 include:

- Refining the draft REAP 2021 Program Development Framework based on feedback from SCAG's Policy Committees,
- Presenting the draft REAP 2021 Program Development Framework to the California Department of Housing and Community Development and its state agency partners as they work to develop the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the program,
- Continued conversations with key regional partners including CTCs and the Subregional COGs to further refine the approach,
- Preparing a report and presentation on the REAP 2021 Program Development Framework for the October series of SCAG Policy Committee meetings, and
- Developing a methodology for allocating resources to each of the proposed program areas based on NOFA requirements, potential impact/contribution to SCS implementation and project readiness/worthiness.