



eCommunicator

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Register Today for the 2019 Inland Empire Innovation Week!

The 2019 Inland Empire Innovation Week, which connects the region's leaders and innovators to each other and to local resources, is being held October 7 – 11, 2019. During Innovation Week, WRCOG is hosting a full-day seminar on Tuesday, October 8, at the Riverside Fox Theatre from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., to discuss "Innovation in Government." There will be several presentations on the impact of innovation in government related to areas like big data, cybersecurity, automation, communication and much more. We hope you join us as we harness innovative synergy from across our growing region. Click [here](#) for more information on the event!

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New TUMF Calculation and Payment Portal

Since the beginning of 2019, WRCOG assumed responsibility for calculating and collecting TUMF on behalf of 18 TUMF Program participating agencies. Starting in October, WRCOG will roll-out a new fee-portal as the primary form for fee calculation and collection! This new process will minimize paperwork for all staff and create a central location to check on the status of development projects payments. Currently, developers only have the option to pay TUMF by check delivered or mailed to WRCOG's office, or electronically through wire transfers. The new portal will offer developers two additional forms of payment,

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WRCOG Secures Over \$30 Million in Funding for its Member Agencies

Since 2017, WRCOG has provided grant writing services to its member agencies for planning and active transportation grants. As part of this service, WRCOG prepares the grant on behalf of a member agency who then submits the grant. Notable grant awardees include the Cities of Riverside (\$16 million), Eastvale (\$6.5 million), Jurupa Valley (\$3 million), and Lake Elsinore (\$2 million).

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Preparing for the Next Fire / Flood / Disaster

WRCOG has been working in collaboration with [SBCTA](#) and [Caltrans](#) on Resilient IE, a dynamic project aimed at enhancing local knowledge and developing tools to support resilience planning for the region's transportation infrastructure. The project recently completed an update to WRCOG's subregional vulnerability assessment and prepared a regionally-tailored [guidebook](#) for incorporating resilience considerations in planning for, investing in, constructing, and maintaining transportation assets. Looking ahead, Resilient IE will soon release a set of city-level hazards and evacuation maps that account for the various climate-related hazards, such as flood and fire, which may impact our local roadways. Additional Resilient IE tools will include a set of resilience strategies to augment the vulnerability assessment, a regional climate adaptation and resiliency template general plan element to support local compliance with SB 379, and more!

To learn more about Resilient IE, click [here](#).

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Mary Nichols to Keynote SoCal AltCar Conference in Riverside

WRCOG is excited to partner and host the 2019 SoCal AltCar Conference, Expo, and Ride & Drive event at the Riverside Convention Center on October 16, 2019! This event seeks to educate business leaders, elected officials, and the community of the variety of alternative fuel vehicles (AFV). The event will be an all-day affair, with panel discussions and an extensive array of AFVs available for attendees to get hands-on experience behind the wheel. The event will also feature Mary D. Nichols, Chair of the California Air Resources



Board, as the keynote speaker. Click [here](#) to register and for more information on sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities!

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Happy California Clean Air Day!

Mark your calendar for California Clean Air Day on October 2, 2019! This day commemorates the variety of efforts undertaken by communities to develop habits that reduce air pollution. To encourage WRCOG member agencies to take action on California Clean Air day, staff is helping organize a series of tree planting ceremony events to mobilize communities to make a positive impact on the quality of air in our region, investing today for generations to come. Take the [Clean Air Day pledge](#) today!



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Prescribed Burns Help to Restore SKR Habitat



The Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency (RCHCA) has a longstanding history of a collaborative partnership with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in areas of fire management, habitat restoration, and community engagement. Recently, RCHCA, BLM and CAL FIRE conducted three prescribed burns of approximately 700 acres. This multi-jurisdictional effort included training for fire crews from Orange, Los Angeles, and Riverside Counties and other fire management agencies. The prescribed burns will enhance Stephens' Kangaroo Rat (SKR) habitat and protect private property by creating fire breaks.

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WRCOG Receives Funds to Expand Household Hazardous Waste Programs



WRCOG’s Environmental Department was recently awarded \$60,000 in CalRecycle grant funds to administer a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) project. This grant will expand community outreach efforts across Western Riverside County, initiate youth education events on environmental preservation, and provide additional capacity for disposal sites. HHW includes commonly used products that require special handling and disposal, such as batteries, light bulbs, and paint, that would otherwise pollute our soil and water. WRCOG is excited to expand recycling and habitat conservation efforts throughout the subregion!

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A BRIGHT Future

WRCOG’s Regional Streetlight Program has reached a milestone with nearly 24,000 new LED streetlights installed across the subregion! With streetlight retrofits nearing completion in the Cities of Eastvale, Murrieta, and Wildomar, residents and commuters are now benefitting from improved roadway visibility, while the subregion benefits as the new lights improve the nighttime sky. The Cities of Hemet, Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Moreno Valley, San Jacinto, and Temecula, and the Jurupa Community Services District, are up next for their streetlight retrofits!



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Fellow Feature - Breana Mena



WRCOG Fellow Breana Mena works in the City of Lake Elsinore’s City Manager’s Office. She assists with various outreach projects, supports communication efforts through social media and website updates, and provides general support to her team. She notes that, “The Fellowship Program has profoundly impacted my professional journey by providing me with a unique platform to improve my interpersonal skills, public speaking, and networking.” Breana will be completing her Bachelors in Business Administration with a Concentration in Human Resource Management from California State University, San Bernardino in 2020.

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Executive Director's Column

The RHNA Disconnect

Despite widespread acknowledgement on the critical need for housing, RHNA often receives pushback from communities



The statewide housing crisis is creating challenges locally for housing the subregion's growing population, meeting Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) targets, complying with changing legislation, and avoiding the specter of risks that might come with findings of non-compliance if requirements are not achieved.

Local jurisdictions in southern California are currently engaged in the RHNA, a state-mandated process to identify the total number of housing units (by affordability level) that each city and county must accommodate in the Housing Element of its General Plan. SCAG is developing the "6th cycle" RHNA allocation, which will allocate housing need to communities for the planning period from October 2021 through October 2029.

According to SCAG, "The RHNA does not necessarily encourage or promote growth, but rather allows communities to anticipate growth, so that collectively the region and subregion can grow in ways that enhance quality of life, improve access to jobs, promote transportation mobility, and addresses social equity, fair share housing needs." Local general plans generally contain vision and policy statements that are complementary to SCAG's RHNA commentary such as this one:

The City of _____ strives to "provide safe and decent housing opportunities for all residents, offering a range of housing options to accommodate the diverse needs of the community."

The need for more housing has emerged as one of California's top priorities. Our collective inability to keep pace with housing demand has been well-documented. Yet when RHNA-time comes around, there's not much willingness among local jurisdictions to accept, much less endorse, the housing allocations that emerge from the process. As of this writing, SCAG and the state Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), the agency that determines the number of units to be distributed by SCAG to local jurisdictions, are at odds regarding what the region's allocation – the RHNA starting point – should be. HCD has allocated about 1.3 million units for SCAG to plan for during the RHNA planning period; SCAG believes the number should be in the 800,000 range (which would amount to 100,000 units per year). Considering that only about 45,000 new housing units were constructed in the SCAG region in 2018, even the lower allocation that SCAG is shooting for seems unachievable. If past RHNA cycles are an indicator, allocating 800,000 units to the nearly 200 communities in the SCAG region will cause rancor among many. How bad will it be if HCD's allocation holds?

What is behind the push back from local jurisdictions on housing? There are

probably many reasons, but consider these:

1. Housing is not typically viewed as a revenue generator: If RHNA stood for “Retail and Hotel Needs Assessment” local jurisdictions would likely be jockeying for first in line position for their allocations, probably clamoring for more than what is allocated to them. That’s because localities have increasingly been placed in the position of using land use as a fiscal tool. Sales tax generating land uses such as retail are coveted; housing... not so much. Until changes in the revenue and tax system occur for housing to be more fiscally lucrative to local jurisdictions, don’t expect much to change here.
2. Local jurisdictions don’t like the state telling them what to do: Granted, the RHNA mandate is for cities and counties to simply be able to demonstrate the capacity to provide housing consistent with projected need. But the one-size-fits-all approach doesn’t sit well with most, and there is growing concern that projected needs will turn into requirements over which jurisdictions have no control.
3. Where should housing for lower-income families be located?: Much of the opposition about RHNA focuses on the allocation of units for lower incomes. In a subregion like Western Riverside County, where average family incomes have actually declined in the last few years, we need conversation that doesn’t put affordable housing in a negative light.
4. We see little talk about conflicting priorities at the statewide level. If the state is keenly interested in reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gases (GHG), why would it want to encourage housing growth in Western Riverside County? Mandating more housing construction in our region, without additional job growth, will only increase the burden on our regional transportation as these residents are forced to drive hours to jobs in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties. Jobs, and specifically where jobs are located in the future, needs to be an integral part of the housing discussion.



[Contact Rick](#)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



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