

NEWS

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Chairman Ovitt earns SCAG's highest honor

The Southern California Association of Governments has named Board of Supervisors Chairman Gary Ovitt as this year's recipient of the prestigious SCAG President's Award for leading the effort to redefine the agency while serving as its president.

The recipient of the annual award is chosen by the agency's president and given to a member of SCAG's Regional Council who demonstrated exemplary leadership and commitment to the agency.

"The contributions that Gary Ovitt made to the Southern California Association of Governments as president have been long-lasting," said current SCAG President Jon Edney. As president from May 2007 to May 2008, Ovitt chaired the "Force for Change" that redefined the agency's direction and led to the subsequent development of SCAG's Strategic Plan.

In 2009, Ovitt led an effort to implement the Strategic Plan when he chaired the Strategic Plan Committee. The special committee, comprised of Regional Council members from throughout Southern California, developed recommendations to implement the Strategic Plan.

The Committee met six times from July to September and addressed issues to improve the effectiveness of the agency, including providing ample time for the Regional Council members to discuss issues such as improving communication, clarifying election procedures, and increasing the participation at SCAG's meetings and events.

SCAG also honored San Bernardino County by awarding the Compass Blueprint, the President's Award for Excellence, to the City of Ontario, where Ovitt once served as mayor and San Bernardino County Administrative Officer Greg Devereaux served as City Manager.

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The award is given to a city or county that has demonstrated visionary planning for mobility, livability, prosperity and sustainability, the four principles of the Compass Blueprint Program. The Ontario Plan is a dynamic framework for sustained, comprehensive leadership in building a community that embodies the Compass Blueprint Principles. It integrates components of city governance that are typically disconnected.

The plan states community direction at a point in time, 2008, and integrates it into a single guidance system that will shape the Ontario community 20 years or more into the future. The Ontario Plan provides for lasting policies to accommodate change. It consists of a Vision, Governance Manual, Policy Plan, City Council Priorities, Implementation Plans and Tracking and Feedback.

While state law mandates certain elements for a General Plan, Ontario has gone above and beyond these requirements and has taken an innovative and fresh take at developing a plan that acts as a comprehensive, fully interconnected, web-based "business plan" for the city. As the only city in California to pursue this approach, Ontario serves as a model for creating a highly transparent guidance system that benefits its entire community.

SCAG is the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization, representing six counties, 189 cities and more than 19 million residents. SCAG undertakes a variety of planning and policy initiatives to encourage a more sustainable Southern California now and in the future. SCAG's counties include San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Riverside, Orange, Ventura, and Imperial.