ITEM# IX A 1

Arroyo Verdugo Communities Joint Powers Authority

DATE: **April 29, 2026**

TO: Governing Board

FROM: **Vice Chair Zizette Mullins, Burbank**

SUBJECT: **SCAG Transportation Committee Meeting – February 5, 2026**

BACKGROUND: Below is a summary of the most recent meeting of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Transportation Committee

RECOMMENDATION: This report is being provided as information only.

MEETINGS OVERVIEW:

Approval of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Programming Procedures
Warren Whiteaker, SCAG staff, presented the proposed Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Programming Procedures. He explained that SCAG is responsible for selecting FHWA-funded projects in the SCAG region, including those funded through the Carbon Reduction Program, such as the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ).
Mr. Whiteaker stated that the Regional Programming Procedures outline post-award requirements for programming and project delivery. He noted the procedures complement previously approved program guidelines and were developed in collaboration with the region's six county transportation commissions over more than a year.
Mr. Whiteaker added that the procedures aim to minimize the loss of federal funds to the SCAG region while maintaining flexibility in project delivery. Upon Regional Council approval, SCAG staff would work with county transportation commissions to ensure compliance. He also noted that staff would post resource materials on the SCAG website and host a Toolbox Tuesday session on February 10 to review the federal transportation project development process.

Metrolink System Update
Darren Kettle, Metrolink Executive Director, provided an update on system ridership, performance, and goals. He noted that Metrolink serves as a critical backbone of Southern California's multimodal transportation network, connecting major employment centers, educational institutions, and activity hubs. Mr. Kettle reported that the system operates seven rail lines across 545 miles, making it the third largest regional passenger rail system in the country.
Mr. Kettle stated that Metrolink's goal is to grow ridership and better understand how to attract travelers who currently drive. He reviewed the system's funding structure, noting that Metrolink relies on regional partners for funding. Prior to the pandemic, the system carried approximately 12 million annual riders, or about 40,000 riders per day; during the pandemic, ridership declined to approximately 4,000 daily riders.

Mr. Kettle discussed changes in ridership patterns, noting fewer traditional commuters but an increase in senior, disabled, and student riders. He explained that Metrolink has shifted its focus from primarily commuter rail to a broader regional rail network, including later night trains and more frequent daytime service. Additional initiatives include a new fare structure with an updated day pass, open-loop payment options, and the replacement of older locomotives with cleaner equipment.
Hon. Colleen Wallace (Banning, WRCOG) asked about crime on the system and whether it had decreased. Mr. Kettle responded that Metrolink has improved efforts to identify potential criminals before boarding, though vandalism along the right-of-way remains an issue affecting operations.
Hon. Jan Harnik (Palm Desert, RCTC) noted that riding Metrolink allows riders to be more productive by avoiding time spent in traffic and asked whether safe overnight parking could be considered at some stations. Mr. Kettle responded that stations are managed locally but that he could raise the issue for Riverside stations.
Hon. Phil Bacerra (Anaheim, Orange County) encouraged expanded late-night train service, noting that riders are concerned about being stranded without return service. Mr. Kettle responded that efforts to increase late-night service are ongoing and cited a Lancaster train departing Union Station that arrives in Lancaster at 1:00 a.m.

The Road to LA28 – A Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategy
Courtney Aguirre, SCAG staff, provided an update on the Road to LA28 Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategy and regional preparations for the upcoming Olympic Games. She noted that approximately 29 months remain to prepare for the event. Ms. Aguirre explained that coordinated communications and transportation demand management strategies for both freight and passenger vehicles will be necessary to effectively manage travel during the games.
Ms. Aguirre reported that Olympic events will be dispersed throughout the region and that SCAG has been tasked with leading regional travel demand management efforts. She reviewed available resources, including the TDM Toolbox, and noted that SCAG will serve as a resource to help connect local partners. She emphasized the importance of centralized messaging and regional coordination to accommodate Olympic-related travel demands. She added that next steps include approval of TDM programmatic categories.
Michael Krouse, President and Chief Executive Officer of GOCAL, also provided remarks on preparations for the games and discussed ongoing efforts to help jurisdictions maximize potential economic benefits associated with the event.