

# Partnering for Healthy and Sustainable Communities

**Local decisions about land use, community design and transportation have a dramatic impact on the economic vitality and health of our communities.** These decisions also have a major impact on greenhouse gas emissions and the air that we breathe. Local leaders that engage residents in understanding this connection and that champion well-designed communities with healthier, more efficient transportation options, are better positioned to partner with state and regional agencies to obtain funding. This funding is crucial to implementing projects aimed at creating safe, healthy and more economically prosperous communities.

## ONTARIO

The City of Ontario is celebrating a \$35 million grant awarded through the state’s Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Program. The grant aims to revitalize the city’s historic core by enhancing public transportation, bike lanes and sidewalks and promoting energy efficiency, affordable housing and new green spaces to improve health outcomes and quality of life for Ontario residents.

The city points to two key investments that catalyzed its ability to implement such a large, transformational project. The first was a \$500,000 investment it received through the state’s Catalyst Projects for California Sustainable Strategies Pilot Program offered by the Department of Housing and Community Development with Prop 1C funds back in 2010. The money from this pilot project enabled the city to develop the plans and overhaul its zoning codes, which were vital to being competitive for the TCC grant.

The second investment was a large contribution through Kaiser Permanente’s HEAL Zone Initiative. Ontario received \$1 million in 2012 and another \$1 million in 2016 to help increase health, access to food and physical fitness activities for families in the city. With the funds, the city made some environmental and institutional changes around community engagement and educational programs.

**“We are proud of the local, regional and state partnerships that led to our Transformative Climate Communities grant. As a longtime advocate of collective initiatives in our community, I know that this investment will transform downtown Ontario while helping improve the region’s air quality and quality of life.”**

— Mayor Paul S. Leon, *City of Ontario*

The education, outreach and marketing programs from the HEAL work became a means by which the city and citizens could build a trusting and supportive relationship. The focus on health became the bond between city and community leaders and served as the basis for defining the city’s future vision.

Partnership became the basis for other grant opportunities that include several Active Transportation Planning Grants and two large Urban Greening Grants totaling almost \$2 million.



While the city benefitted greatly from its visionary leadership both at the local and state level, it attributes its success in obtaining the TCC grant to its regional collaboration. Surrounding cities helped champion Ontario’s TCC proposal understanding that the economic benefits would also flow to their residents.

**“State and local government partnerships are key to achieving California’s air quality goals, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and boosting community health and vitality.”**

— Mary Nichols  
*Chair, California Air Resources Board*

## ONTARIO STATE FUNDING

- \$35M | Transformative Climate Communities 2018
- \$368K | Active Transportation Program, Cycle 2  
Safe Routes to School Infrastructure
- \$1.14K | Active Transportation Program, Cycle 1
- \$150K | Active Transportation Program, Cycle 1
- \$998K | Urban Greening Grant 2014
- \$993K | Urban Greening Grant 2012
- \$500K | Sustainable Strategies Pilot Program 2010

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## SOUTH GATE

The City of South Gate, once a thriving manufacturing center, was hit hard by the decline of industrial employment in Southern California. Ten years after a highly publicized corruption scandal, this predominantly Latino community of 100,000 residents began implementing a visionary General Plan to guide the creation of a more healthy and prosperous community.

Within just two years of completing the General Plan in 2009, the city received more than two million dollars in grants to help implement it, including funds to complete an energy strategy, safe routes to school strategy, community bike plan, an updated zoning ordinance and a downtown specific plan.

These plans led to a variety of projects including the Azalea Shopping Center, which transformed 30 acres of vacant industrial land into a retail amenity that incorporates a host of environmentally friendly features. Not only does the development help reduce vehicle miles traveled by providing local options to shop and dine, but it serves as a symbol of how the city plans to optimize its land to create a healthier, more sustainable and prosperous future for its community.

The city is also seeing multiple benefits from its new Parque Dos Rios Project, which converted an empty seven-acre lot into an urban orchard. The project was designed to not only create open space for recreation and wildlife, but will also address many other priority issues such as air quality, storm water quality, water conservation, groundwater storage and traffic congestion relief through the creation of bike trails.

The city has put a lot of focus on creating alternative transportation options for its community. South Gate's recently completed \$5.8 million Southern Avenue Park and Bikeway Project aims at connecting its underserved community to the Los Angeles River with a 20 acre linear park and dedicated bike trail. The project received \$3.3 million in grant monies including two Safe Routes to Schools Grants totaling almost \$900,000 and a variety of other grants stemming from Prop 84 funds.

## RANCHO CUCAMONGA

The City of Rancho Cucamonga was once a small agricultural town of 50,000. However, after several decades of rapid growth, Rancho Cucamonga evolved into a suburban city of 175,000 that soon became plagued with overwhelming health and social equity issues. In 2008, Rancho Cucamonga launched its HealthyRC initiative, a city-community partnership, to address pressing health issues. Through strong community engagement and unwavering perseverance from staff and elected officials, the alliance has attracted awards, recognition and funding that has furthered its ability to implement policies, programs and projects that are creating a healthier city for all.

Among its first achievements was a \$797,000 Safe Routes to School Grant. This major win prompted other efforts such as a school vending policy, community garden, a farmers' market ordinance and a park assessment. The work done through the park assessment allowed the city to compete and secure a \$37 million Prop 84 grant from the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program which led to a three acre park tailored to fit the community's needs that was completed in 2017.

Also completed in 2017, was the city's Sustainable Communities Action Plan, which documents strategies and actions aimed at creating a clean and healthy environment for all that live, work and learn in Rancho Cucamonga. The innovative plan, funded through the Strategic Growth Council via Southern California Association of Governments, serves as a roadmap for advancing environmental sustainability and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through 2020 and beyond.

SCAG also funded Rancho Cucamonga's new Empire Station Specific Plan, a redevelopment of the Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink station into a transit-oriented village consisting of for-sale and for-rent residences, an intergenerational senior living facility and preschool, restaurants, small retail, a movie theater and a gourmet grocery market. The city envisions that the station will become a destination for young families and a model for how suburban residents live, work and commute in the future.

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Champion local initiatives for climate change, community health outcomes and sustainable development.
- Work as a region and with community partners on project development and advocacy efforts.
- Develop plans that pursue diversified housing and transportation options for various demographics.
- Document, share and build on success.