

CONFERENCE AGENDA

SELF-HELP COUNTIES COALITION

November 15 - 17, 2026 · Manchester Grand Hyatt, San Diego

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15	**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16**	**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17**
Leadership Workshop · VIP & Welcome Receptions	*Core Conference Day*	*General Session · Technical Tours*

DAY 1 · SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
All Day	**Hospitality Suite**	*Promenade AB*
11:00 AM – 4:30 PM	**Exhibit Hall Set-Up**	*Harbor GH, Corridor II*
1:00 PM – 6:30 PM	**Registration Open**	*Harbor Foyer A*
2:30 PM – 4:30 PM	**Leadership Workshop: Building the Next Generation of Transportation Leaders** ***By invitation only.*** This exclusive leadership workshop, moderated by Sarah Catz, is reserved for deputy directors, assistant directors, senior managers, and other high-potential emerging leaders from SHCC member agencies.	*Promenade AB*
4:30 PM – 5:15 PM	**VIP Reception** An exclusive reception for **Presenting and Platinum Sponsors**, SHCC leadership, and invited guests to connect before the Welcome Reception. Enjoy drinks and light refreshments while networking with transportation leaders and colleagues in a relaxed, intimate setting. ***BY INVITATION ONLY***	*Harbor Terrace*
5:15 PM – 6:30 PM	**Welcome Reception w/Exhibitors** Kick off Focus on the Future at the **Welcome Reception** with Exhibitors! Connect with colleagues, industry partners, and transportation leaders while exploring the exhibit area and enjoying drinks and hors d'oeuvres. It's the perfect opportunity to reconnect, make new connections, and start the conference on a high note.	*Harbor GH, Corridor II*

DAY 2 · MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16 (CORE DAY)

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
All Day	**Hospitality Suite**	*Promenade AB*
7:30 AM – 6:00 PM	**Registration Open**	*Harbor Foyer A*
7:30 AM – 9:00 AM	**Breakfast w/ Exhibitors** Start your morning with breakfast and conversation in the exhibit area. Connect with fellow attendees and industry partners, visit with exhibitors, and fuel up for a full day of sessions and networking.	*Harbor GH, Corridor II*

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
9:00 AM – 10:15 AM	**Opening General Session: Election Analysis** **Join us as we welcome attendees to Focus on the Future** with a timely look at the **2026 election results and what they could mean for transportation in California**. Keith Dunn, SHCC Executive Director, will lead a discussion examining the political landscape, key outcomes, and potential impacts on transportation policy, funding, and priorities in the year ahead. **Moderator:** Keith Dunn, Self-Help Counties Coalition **Speakers:** • Josh Arce, California Alliance for Jobs • Ruth Bernstein, EMC Research • Ben Lopez, Rebuild SoCal Partnership	*Harbor ABC, Corridor I*
10:15 AM – 10:30 AM	**Networking Break w/Exhibitors** Take a break, grab a refreshment, and connect! Visit with exhibitors, catch up with colleagues, make new connections, and continue the conversations sparked throughout the conference.	*Harbor GH, Corridor II*
CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS · 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM		
	Session #1: Collaborative Delivery Unplugged: Agency, Engineer & Contractor Perspectives on What Really Happens Collaborative delivery promises better communication, shared problem-solving and stronger project outcomes—but what does it really look like in practice? This candid roundtable brings together agency, engineering and contractor perspectives for an open conversation about the realities of collaborative delivery. Through lessons learned and real-world experiences, participants will explore what works, where challenges arise, how roles and relationships evolve, and what teams can do to build trust and navigate issues before they derail a project. Rather than a traditional panel presentation, this interactive discussion will encourage an honest exchange of perspectives and practical takeaways that attendees can apply to their own projects and partnerships. **Moderator:** Randy Iwasaki, President & CEO, Iwasaki Consulting Services, Inc. **Speakers:** • Keith Butz, Atkinson Construction • Ray Hopkins, Caltrans • Jeff Mills, Orange County Transportation Authority • Mark Reno, Consor Engineers • Nathan Rinaldi, Teichert Construction	*Harbor D*

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
	Session #2: Managed Lanes: From Modeling to Meaningful Mobility Managed lanes are becoming an increasingly important tool for addressing congestion, improving travel reliability, and maximizing the capacity of existing transportation corridors. Drawing on modeling work and lessons from local agencies, this session will examine what works, what does not, and how agencies can navigate funding, equity, public acceptance, and implementation challenges. Participants will leave with a practical toolkit to help elected officials and transportation leaders make informed, defensible decisions about managed lanes. **Moderator:** Ben Stabler, DKS Associates **Speakers:** • Aaron Hake, Riverside County Transportation Commission • Darrell Johnson, Orange County Transportation Authority • Lisa Klein, Metropolitan Transportation Commission • Bhargava Sana, San Diego Association of Governments • Peter Skinner, San Mateo County Transportation Authority	*Harbor E*
	Session #3: Navigating Transportation Funding Uncertainty Transportation funding is scarce, and agencies are being asked to compete—and deliver—across increasingly divergent federal and state landscapes. This session brings together grant strategists, agency leaders, and policy experts for a candid conversation on how to navigate that uncertainty and maximize successful outcomes. Panelists will dive into the growing divide between federal and state funding priorities, and how agencies should frame and position their projects. The discussion will cover practical realities agencies, local match requirements that can run as high as 50%, the risks tied to OMB uniform guidance and potential clawbacks, and how to keep projects on track amid that uncertainty. Through real-world case studies, panelists will share what's worked, what hasn't, and where agencies can improve their grant strategy and advocacy approach—covering timing, messaging, and audience considerations that can make or break a funding pursuit. **Moderator:** Adam Stephenson, Drago Vantage, LLC **Speakers:** • Ryan McClain, Contra Costa Transportation Authority • Joel Rubin, CFM Advocates • Dawn Vettese, San Diego Association of Governments • Matthew Yosgott, California Transportation Commission	*Harbor F*

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
	Session #4: One Size Does Not Fit All: VMT in the Real World California's transition to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) has reshaped how transportation, housing, and development projects are evaluated. But years into implementation, one thing is increasingly clear: **VMT does not play out the same way everywhere.** Dense urban areas, growing regions, smaller cities, agricultural communities, and rural areas each face different travel patterns, development pressures, transit options, and opportunities for meaningful mitigation. Combining new research with real-world agency experience, this session will examine how VMT implementation is playing out across California. Panelists will explore the practical implications of VMT regulations, the challenges agencies are encountering, and the complex intersection of mitigation, housing, economic development, equity, and urban-rural differences. Moving beyond the theory of VMT, the discussion will tackle a timely question for California's Self-Help Counties: How can we advance the state's climate, housing, economic development, and mobility goals while creating VMT policies that reflect the very different realities of California's communities? **Moderator:** Udit Molakatalla, DKS Associates **Speakers:** • Tuere Fa'aola, San Diego Association of Governments • Matt Kelly, Contra Costa Transportation Authority • David Knudsen, Riverside County Transportation Commission • Ted Smalley, Tulare County Association of Governments	*Harbor I*

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
12:00 PM – 2:00 PM	**CEO Forum & Luncheon** ***Big Ideas. Candid Conversations. Executive Perspectives.*** **NEW Format!** Go beyond the traditional project update and join SHCC CEOs and Executive Directors for an interactive conversation about the issues, opportunities and priorities shaping transportation across California. Beginning with conversations at the table and expanding into a facilitated discussion with SHCC leadership, this luncheon will give attendees a unique opportunity to hear directly from agency leaders, share perspectives and explore where stronger collaboration can make a difference. **Speakers:** • Tilly Chang, San Francisco County Transportation Authority • Sarah Christensen, Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission • Amber Collins, Stanislaus Council of Governments • Deborah Dagang, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority • Aaron Hake, Riverside County Transportation Commission • Darrell Johnson, Orange County Transportation Authority • Marjie Kirn, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments • Todd Muck, Transportation Agency for Monterey County • Mario Orso, San Diego Association of Governments • Anne Richman, Transportation Authority of Marin • Carolyn Schindler, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority • Danielle Schmitz, Napa Valley Transportation Authority • Peter Skinner, San Mateo County Transportation Authority • Ted Smalley, Tulare County Association of Governments • Patricia Taylor, Madera County Transportation Commission/Authority	*Harbor ABC, Corridor I*
2:00 PM – 2:30 PM	**Networking Break w/Exhibitors** Take a break, grab a refreshment, and connect! Visit with exhibitors, catch up with colleagues, make new connections, and continue the conversations sparked throughout the conference.	*Harbor GH, Corridor II*
CONCURRENT TRACKS · 2:30 PM – 4:00 PM		

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
	AFTERNOON TRACK #1: POLICY TRACK **Federal Transportation Funding 101: Understanding the Past, Present, and Future** This fireside chat will provide attendees with the foundational knowledge to better understand how federal transportation programs and polices work, how they currently impact California, and what the trends are for future funding. It will cover the current landscape as authorized by the IIJA and what the environment in Washington D.C. is for the next reauthorization bill and how could it impact California. **Moderator:** Andrew Dohrmann, TYLin **Speakers:** • James Corless, Sacramento Area Council of Governments • Paul Golaszewski, California Transportation Commission • Doug Hecox, Federal Highway Administration	*Harbor D*
	AFTERNOON TRACK #2: COMMUNITY & RELATIONSHIP BUILDING TRACK **No Fair-Weather Friends: Building Partnerships Beyond the Ballot** Strong partnerships shouldn't begin when you need support at the ballot box. This interactive session explores how transportation agencies can build authentic, lasting relationships with labor, community organizations, nonprofits, businesses, and industry partners long before the next measure or initiative. Through real-world examples and candid conversation, attendees will explore what makes partnerships work, how to stay connected between campaigns, and why investing in relationships today can build stronger communities—and stronger support—for tomorrow. **Moderator:** Marnie Primmer, Connected Consulting **Speakers:** • Josh Arce, California Alliance for Jobs • Lindy Johnson, Contra Costa Transportation Authority • Ben Lopez, Rebuild SoCal Partnership • Carolyn Schindler, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority • Danielle Schmitz, Napa Valley Transportation Authority	*Harbor E*
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM	**SHCC Board Meeting**	*Mission Beach ABC*
3:30 PM – 5:30 PM	**Poster Session + Exhibit Engagement** **Ideas, innovation, and connections come together!** Explore this year's Poster Session featuring **AI in the Workplace**, connect directly with poster presenters, and discover how organizations are putting new ideas into action. While you're there, visit with exhibitors, meet industry partners, and enjoy dedicated time to network, ask questions, and exchange ideas with colleagues from across California	*Harbor GH, Corridor II*

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
5:30 PM – 6:30 PM	**Networking Reception w/ Exhibitors** **Raise a glass to a great day at Focus on the Future!** Unwind, reconnect, and keep the conversations going during an evening of networking with colleagues, transportation leaders, and industry partners. Visit with exhibitors, make new connections, and enjoy a relaxed atmosphere before heading into the evening.	*Harbor GH, Corridor II*

DAY 3 · TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
8:00 AM – 1:00 PM	**Hospitality Suite**	*Promenade AB*
8:00 AM – 12:00 PM	**Registration Open**	*Harbor Foyer A*
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	**Breakfast w/ Exhibitors** **One last chance to connect!** Start the morning with breakfast and make the most of your final dedicated time with our exhibitors and sponsors. Stop by, continue conversations, make those last connections, and be sure to thank the industry partners whose support helps make Focus on the Future possible.	*Harbor GH, Corridor II*

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	**General Session** **Big-picture updates meet real-world agency conversation.** This morning's General Session will move from a statewide look at the issues shaping transportation in California to an interactive roundtable focused on what agency staff are seeing and experiencing on the ground. The morning will conclude with a focused discussion on **procurement and project planning**, creating an opportunity to exchange ideas, share challenges, and learn from one another. • **Statewide Focus 9:00–9:30 AM** Hear the latest statewide perspective on the priorities, policies and initiatives shaping California's transportation landscape. This timely update will provide insight into key issues affecting transportation agencies and what to watch as we look ahead. • **Agency Staff Roundtable 9:30–11:00 AM** Hear directly from SHCC agency staff about the work happening behind the scenes to turn agency priorities into projects. This interactive conversation will explore current challenges, project delivery, and where stronger collaboration with industry partners can help move projects forward. **Moderator:** Sarkes Khachek, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments **Speakers:** • Vivek Bhat, Alameda County Transportation Commission • Benjamin Giuliani, Tulare County Association of Governments • David Knudsen, Riverside County Transportation Commission • Jesse Koehler, San Francisco County Transportation Authority • Kristin Jacinto, Orange County Transportation Authority • Peter Skinner, San Mateo County Transportation Authority • Robyn Wapner, San Diego Association of Governments • Michael Zeller, Transportation Agency for Monterey County • **What's Next & Thank You for Attending! 11:00–11:30 AM** **Speakers:** • Keith Dunn, Self-Help Counties Coalition • Deborah Dagang, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority • Aaron Hake, Riverside County Transportation Commission • Darrell Johnson, Orange County Transportation Authority • Anne Richman, Transportation Authority of Marin	*Harbor ABC, Corridor I*
11:30 AM	**Conference Adjourns**	

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	**Local Technical Tours** **Explore San Diego's Transportation Infrastructure Firsthand!** Take the learning beyond the conference room with an opportunity to experience San Diego's transportation infrastructure firsthand! These optional technical tours offer attendees a closer look at significant transportation projects, operations, and infrastructure throughout the region, with insights from the experts involved in their planning, engineering, and delivery. **Technical Tour Options Include:** • San Diego International Airport – New Terminal 1 • San Diego–Coronado Bridge • LOSSAN Rail Corridor – Del Mar Bluffs All tours take place on **Tuesday, November 17, 2026**, following the conclusion of the conference. Space is limited, and advance registration is required. --- **San Diego International Airport – New Terminal 1** **Capacity:** 10 conference attendees **Tour Time:** 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM **Transportation:** Depart Manchester Grand Hyatt at 12:30 PM; return at approximately 3:45 PM. Join representatives from the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority for an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of the new Terminal 1 development at San Diego International Airport. Attendees will explore key elements of the project, including airport roadway improvements, integrated public art installations, innovative architectural features, and the planning and operations that support one of the region's most important transportation gateways. Participants will gain insight into how the Terminal 1 Program is transforming the airport experience while creating a modern, welcoming front door to the San Diego region. **Note:** This tour will take place in an active airport environment. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended. Valid government-issued identification is required, and attendees should be prepared to comply with all airport safety and security protocols. Please notify organizers in advance if special accommodations are needed. --- **San Diego–Coronado Bridge Tour** **Capacity:** 15 conference attendees **Tour Time:** 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM **Transportation:** Depart Manchester Grand Hyatt at 1:15 PM; return at approximately 4:00 PM. Join Caltrans for a unique walking tour of the iconic San Diego–Coronado Bridge, spanning more than two miles across San Diego Bay. Attendees will get an up-close look at key asset management and safety initiatives, including seismic retrofit enhancements, paint preservation, and progress on the bridge's suicide deterrent system.	*Offsite*

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
	Important Tour Information: Flat, closed-toe walking shoes and comfortable clothing are recommended. This tour involves heights, tight spaces, minor stooping, and an optional ladder climb. Please notify conference organizers in advance if special accommodations are needed. **LOSSAN Rail Corridor – Del Mar Bluffs Tour** *Presented by North County Transit District (NCTD) and San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)* **Capacity:** 35 conference attendees **Tour Time:** 12:30 pm - 4:00 pm **Departure & Return:** Depart Santa Fe Depot at 1:00 PM; return to Santa Fe Depot at approximately 4:00 PM. **Walking Tour of the Del Mar Bluffs Phase 5 Project** Join representatives from SANDAG and NCTD for an informative walking tour of the multi-phase Del Mar Bluffs Stabilization Project along the Los Angeles–San Diego–San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor, one of the nation's busiest passenger rail corridors. Since 2003, multiple stabilization projects have been implemented to maintain a stable track bed along the coastal bluffs and protect this critical rail connection from erosion, landslides, and seismic events. Attendees will walk along the beach with project staff to observe improvements associated with Phase 5, learn about the engineering and environmental challenges of maintaining rail infrastructure along the coastline, and gain insights into ongoing efforts to protect the corridor's long-term safety and reliability. **Important Tour Information:** This tour includes walking along the beach and potentially uneven terrain. Comfortable clothing and sturdy, closed-toe walking shoes are recommended. **Registration Information** Technical tours are optional and available exclusively to registered Focus on the Future conference attendees. Capacity is limited for each tour, and advance registration is required. Tour availability is on a first-come, first-served basis.	