

35<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AND LEADERSHIP ADDRESS

2026

## Leading With Momentum.

With Skateboarding Legend

**TONY  
HAWK**





# Pechanga Welcomes Western Riverside Council of Governments

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Over twenty years ago, our Tribe celebrated its most significant enhancement to our gaming operation with the opening of the Pechanga Resort Casino. The resort was the culmination of years of labor, sacrifice, and dedication by the Tribe to secure self-reliance for generations to come.

Since then, the Tribe has supported our shared community with quality jobs for thousands of our neighbors, contributed over \$6 million towards local education and over \$30 million to non-profits, protected the place of the Sacred Creation Area for all Luiseño Indian People and quality of life for Temecula through the conservation of Pu'éska Mountain, and more.

We look forward to continuing our strong partnership with fellow governments to move our region forward collectively.

## Western Riverside Council of Governments

pays homage to the indigenous 'Atáaxum (Luiseño people) and acknowledge the land on which the 35th Annual General Assembly and Leadership Address is located and upon which we are gathered is part of their Traditional homeland.

Today, Pechanga is one of six federally recognized Luiseño Bands whose Traditional territory encompasses western Riverside County, northern San Diego County, and the Southern Channel Islands. The Pechanga people have remained committed to the stewardship of this land over many centuries. It has been cherished and protected, as elders have instructed the young through generations. We are honored and grateful to be here today on their traditional lands.



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# Chair's Welcome.



Good evening, and welcome.

Tonight is special as we celebrate WRCOG's 35th Anniversary - 35 years of regional collaboration, shared leadership, and real results for Western Riverside County. And in honor of our beginnings in 1991- it's totally awesome!

This past year reflects the strength of that partnership. We completed French Valley Parkway Phase II, improving mobility and supporting economic growth. We advanced six REAP 2.0 projects, helping our member cities with planning and housing efforts. We secured \$3 million in grant funding for zero-emission vehicle initiatives, invested \$3 million in energy efficiency workforce programs, and returned \$80,000 in Cash for Kilowatt refunds to public entities through I-REN.

Thousands of residents also joined our Love Your Neighborhood and Recycled Oil Filter events, proving that small actions, taken together, create meaningful impact.

These successes happen because of you — our member agencies, partners, Executive Committee, and dedicated staff. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to regional solutions.

We are also honored to welcome our keynote speaker, Tony Hawk, whose story of resilience and momentum reminds us what's possible when vision meets perseverance.

Finally, thank you to our generous sponsors. After the program, please join us for the After Party in the Grand Ballroom, sponsored by NAIOP.

Here's to 35 years and to what we build next.

Sincerely,

Brenda Dennstedt  
Chairwoman, WRCOG



# About our Speaker

Legendary Skateboarder & Entrepreneur



**The most recognized action sports figure in the world,** Tony Hawk was just nine-years old when his brother changed his life by giving him a blue fiberglass Bahne skateboard. By fourteen he'd turned pro, and by sixteen he was widely considered the best skateboarder on earth. He was world champion 12 years in a row and is a 16-time X Games medalist. In 1999, he became the first skater to ever complete a 900, the holy grail of vert skating. Shortly thereafter, he teamed up with Activision to launch Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, now a billion dollar video game franchise. He has created a Tony Hawk brand that includes Birdhouse Skateboards, Hawk Clothing, and the Tony Hawk Signature Series sporting goods and toys. Tony authored a New York Times bestseller and oversees his films, television and commercial production company, 900 Films. And in 2022, a biographical documentary film titled "Tony Hawk: Until the Wheels Fall Off" by award-winning director Sam Jones debuted on HBO, giving an in-depth look at Tony's legendary career and personal life. He founded The Skatepark Project (formerly the Tony Hawk Foundation), which has given away over \$10 million to over 650 skatepark projects throughout the United States that serve over six million visitors a year.



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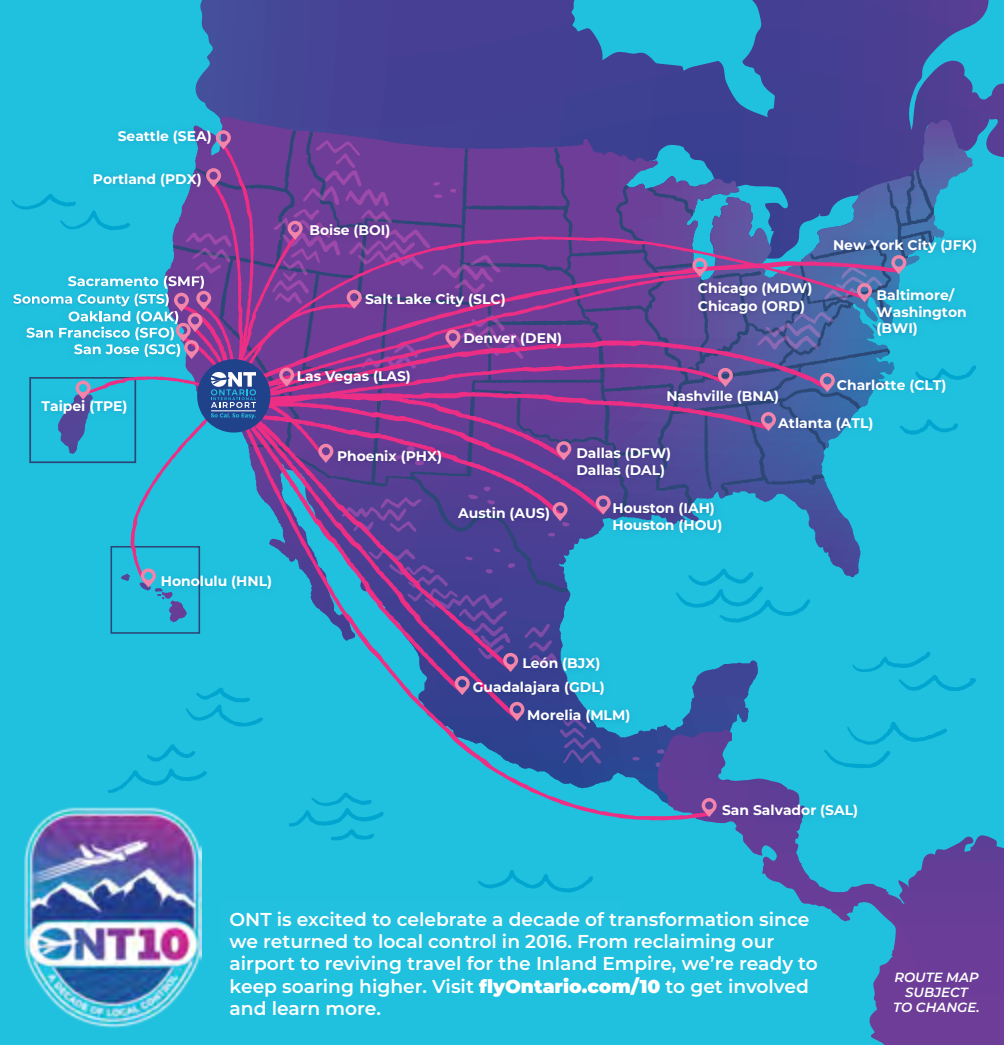
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ONT is excited to celebrate a decade of transformation since we returned to local control in 2016. From reclaiming our airport to reviving travel for the Inland Empire, we're ready to keep soaring higher. Visit [flyOntario.com/10](http://flyOntario.com/10) to get involved and learn more.

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INLAND EMPIRE CHAPTER

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**We applaud WRCOG Chair Brenda Dennstedt for her outstanding leadership and dedicated service. We value WRCOG's continued regional collaboration and look forward to ongoing partnership with Chair Dennstedt, Vice Chair Jacque Casillas, and the WRCOG Executive Committee.**



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 NAIOP Inland Empire



# Event Agenda.

**4:00 PM** **REGISTRATION**

PRE-DINNER RECEPTIONS

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**6:00 PM** **DINNER PROGRAM**

### WELCOME

**Brenda Dennstedt**  
WRCOG Chair

**Mark Macarro**  
Tribal Chairman

### INVOCATION

### PRESENTATION OF COLORS & FLAG SALUTE

**Camp Pendleton, 1st Marine  
Division**

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

**Evelyn Meneses**

### PERFORMANCES

**90's Quintet by Temecula Valley  
Youth Symphony**  
Shelby Huber, Music Director

**Skateboarding Demo**  
by SK8-BRD-BUS featuring Coco  
Atama aka 'Blind Thrasher'

BUSINESS MEETING

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

STAFF RECOGNITIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBER SERVICE MILESTONES

DINNER

### SPEAKER:

**TONY HAWK**

Legendary Skateboarder & Entrepreneur

**8:30 PM** **POST-EVENT RECEPTION**

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## RELIVE THE MAGIC

**Tonight was unforgettable — and now you can relive it all!**




Scan the QR code to browse photos from the Speaker's (VIP) Reception, the main event, and the After Party. Find your favorite memories, share the fun, and celebrate an incredible evening with us!

<https://cherishedmemoriesphotography.com/event/wrcog/>



# WRCOG Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee is WRCOG's decision-making policy board. The Executive Committee is comprised of elected officials from each of WRCOG's member agencies and meets monthly to discuss policy issues and consider recommendations from WRCOG's Technical Advisory Committee.

<b>CHAIR</b>		<b>VICE-CHAIR</b>		<b>2ND VICE-CHAIR</b>	
	<b>Brenda Dennstedt</b> WMWD		<b>Jacque Casillas</b> Corona		<b>Mike Lara</b> Beaumont



**Sheri Flynn**  
Banning



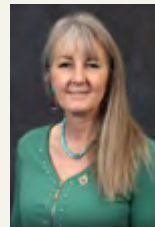
**Eric Cundieff**  
Calimesa



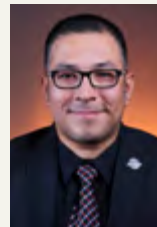
**Mark Terry**  
Canyon Lake



**Christian Dinco**  
Eastvale



**Connie Howard Clark**  
Hemet



**Chris Barajas**  
Jurupa Valley



**Brian Tisdale**  
Lake Elsinore



**Bob Karwin**  
Menifee



**Elena Baca-Santa Cruz**  
Moreno Valley



**Lori Stone**  
Murrieta



**Kevin Bash**  
Norco



**Michael Vargas**  
Perris



**Chuck Conder**  
Riverside



**Jessica Alexander**  
Temecula



**Crystal Ruiz**  
San Jacinto



**Ashlee DePhillippo**  
Wildomar



**David Slawson**  
EMWD



**Dr. Edwin Gomez**  
RCOE



**Jose Medina**  
County of Riverside  
District 1



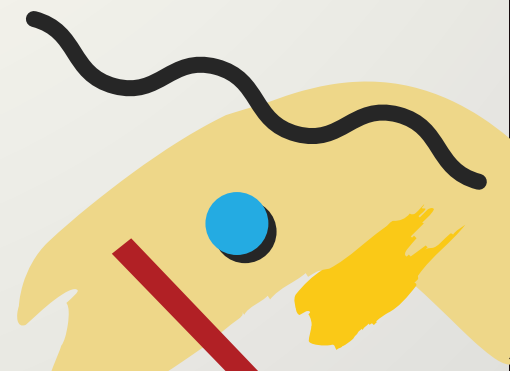
**Karen Spiegel**  
County of Riverside  
District 2



**Chuck Washington**  
County of Riverside  
District 3



**Yxstian Gutierrez**  
County of Riverside  
District 5





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- **Policy Planning**
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- LEWIS OFFICE & INDUSTRIAL**
- LEWIS LAND ACQUISITION**



# WRCOG Leadership.



**2025-26**  
Brenda Dennstedt



**2025**  
Rita Rogers



**2024**  
Chris Barajas



**2023**  
Crystal Ruiz



**2022**  
Karen Spiegel



**2021**  
Kevin Bash



**2020**  
Bonnie Wright



**2019**  
Chuck Washington



**2018**  
Debbie Franklin



**2017**  
Ben Benoit



**2016**  
Brian Tisdale



**2015**  
Randon Lane



**2014**  
Jeff Stone



**2013**  
Jim Hyatt



**2012**  
Robin Hastings



**2011**  
Kelly Bennett



**2010**  
Robin Lowe



**2009**  
Jeff Stone



**2008**  
Chuck Washington



**2007**  
Marion Ashley



**2005-06**  
Jeff Miller



**2003-04**  
Kelly Seyarto



**2002**  
Jim Venable



**2001**  
Frank Hall



**2000**  
Bob Buster



**1999**  
Chuck Washington



**1998**  
Andrea Puga



**1997**  
Ron Loveridge



**1996**  
Ron Roberts



**1995**  
John Giardinelli



**1994**  
Kay Ceniceros



**1993**  
Denise Lanning



**1992**  
Jim Winkler



**1991**  
Richard MacGregor

# WRCOG Members.



**CITY OF  
BANNING**



**CITY OF  
BEAUMONT**



**CITY OF  
CALIMESA**



**CITY OF  
CANYON LAKE**



**CITY OF  
CORONA**



**CITY OF  
EASTVALE**



**CITY OF  
HEMET**



**CITY OF  
JURUPA VALLEY**



**CITY OF  
LAKE ELSINORE**



**CITY OF  
MENIFEE**



**CITY OF  
MORENO VALLEY**



**CITY OF  
MURRIETA**



**CITY OF  
NORCO**



**CITY OF  
PERRIS**



**CITY OF  
RIVERSIDE**



**CITY OF  
SAN JACINTO**



**CITY OF  
TEMECULA**



**CITY OF  
WILDOMAR**



**COUNTY OF  
RIVERSIDE**



**EASTERN MUNICIPAL  
WATER DISTRICT**



**WESTERN WATER**



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Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD) is replacing aging septic systems with a modern sewer system to protect water quality and public health.

Our Septic to Sewer Conversion project helps prevent contamination, protect local water sources and provide a reliable system for the future - at no cost to the community.

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Thanks to the SWRCB

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# It's Cool to be Kind

Our buses are for everyone—students, commuters, families and neighbors—and a great ride starts with simple actions. The Five P's are friendly reminders that help everyone feel comfortable, safe and welcome when riding with Riverside Transit Agency.

## The Five P's: How We Ride Together

**People:** Be kind—the vibe you bring on the bus matters.

**Property:** Keep the bus clean—leave it better than you found it.

**Process:** A smooth ride starts with simple steps—have your fare ready and follow the flow.

**Prohibited:** Save food, drinks and loud music or loud conversation for off the bus.

**Penalty:** Not following the rules may affect your ride.

Scan the QR code to explore the campaign and watch a short video.



[RiversideTransit.com/kindness](https://www.RiversideTransit.com/kindness)



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The **Master of Public Policy (MPP)** program at the UC Riverside School of Public Policy prepares students for careers in law, healthcare, government, non-profit organizations, and more.



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# What is WRCOG?



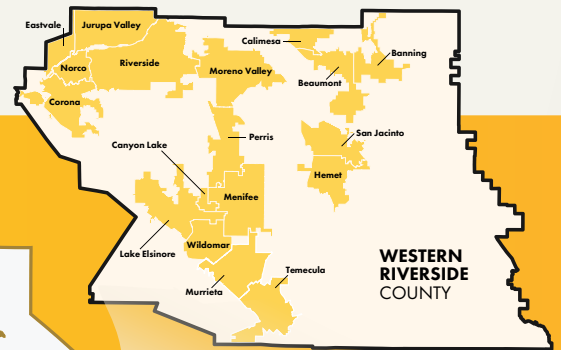
WRCOG is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), consisting of the County of Riverside, 18 cities, two regional water districts and the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools. Recognizing that issues related to growth are not constrained by city or county boundaries, WRCOG focuses on a number of regional matters important to the future of Western Riverside County. By working together through its committee structure and utilizing existing resources, WRCOG enables strong advocacy, and strengthens Western Riverside County's standing in southern California and the state. WRCOG's program areas are varied and range from transportation to air quality, solid waste, environment, energy, resiliency, sustainability, and growth.

Our programs include:

- Energy (PACE, Streetlights)
- Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN)
- Environment and Recycling (Clean Cities Coalition, Solid Waste Cooperative, Regional Food Rescue Program, Used Oil Recycling, Love Your Neighborhood, Community Transportation Needs Assessment)
- Public Service Fellowship Program
- Grant writing assistance
- Regional Planning
- Transportation (TUMF, Active Transportation Plan, VMT Mitigation, Transportation Modeling Services)
- Water Task Force



## THE SUBREGION



### WRCOG'S I-REN PROGRAM RECEIVES STATEWIDE RECOGNITION

The Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN) has received a 2026 Eureka! Award from the California Association of Councils of Governments, recognizing its leadership in advancing sustainability, resilience, equity, and regional collaboration. Serving the Inland Empire, I-REN delivers energy efficiency programs, workforce training, and technical assistance to local



agencies historically underserved by statewide initiatives. To date, the program has developed 45 resilience roadmaps, completed 101 energy audits, and helped secure \$1.8 million in federal funding. Through partnerships with Western Riverside Council of Governments, San Bernardino Council of Governments, and Coachella Valley Association of Governments, I-REN continues to expand access to clean energy solutions and careers.

# 2026 Sponsors.

The WRCOG Supporting Foundation recognizes and thanks our many sponsor partnerships for the 35th Annual General Assembly & Leadership Address!

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# Community Service Award Recognition.

## MARY CARNES



Mary Carnes is recognized for her longstanding dedication to the Menifee community through her leadership, volunteerism, and commitment to bringing people together. A resident since 1995, she has been actively involved with the Menifee Arts Council for over a decade and currently serves as its President, helping expand opportunities for local artists and promote arts and cultural events throughout the city.

Mary also serves as a Board Member and past Secretary of the Menifee Valley Community Cupboard, supporting efforts to address food insecurity through volunteer service and community events. As an Ambassador for the Menifee Valley Chamber of Commerce, she remains actively engaged across the city. Known for her signature “MaryChrisMess” holiday display and annual community events, Mary continues to foster connection and enrich the quality of life in Menifee.

## MONICA LYONS

Monica Lyons is recognized for her extraordinary commitment to serving and uplifting the Canyon Lake community and surrounding region. After overcoming a traumatic life event, she made Canyon Lake her home and has since dedicated herself to volunteerism, community leadership, and charitable outreach.

She played a key role in expanding the City's Turkey Drive from 16 turkeys in 2023 to 376 in 2025 and founded the Pet Blanket Drive, which has grown to provide over 2,100 blankets to animals in need. Through her businesses and personal efforts, Monica supports families battling cancer, Habitat for Humanity homeowners, veterans, and seniors. Her leadership, compassion, and ability to mobilize others have created a lasting and meaningful impact across the community.



## EASTVALE CHINESE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION (ECAA)

The Eastvale Chinese American Association (ECAA) is recognized for its leadership in creating and supporting programs that enhance quality of life for Eastvale residents and visitors. As a key partner in launching the City's annual Lantern Festival and host of the Mid-Autumn Festival, ECAA brings thousands together to celebrate culture, community, and connection. These events foster civic engagement and support local businesses.



Since 2018, ECAA volunteers have supported numerous community events with dedication and professionalism, including managing bike valet services that promote safe and accessible transportation. Through a wide range of community classes, ECAA creates opportunities for learning, connection, and belonging for people of all ages. Their continued service has made a lasting impact, helping to make Eastvale a vibrant and welcoming community.

## THE ROTARY CLUB OF MURRIETA

The Rotary Club of Murrieta is recognized for its strong commitment to community engagement, humanitarian service, and programs that enhance the well-being of residents across the region. Through its vocational initiatives, Rotary provides scholarships and teacher grants that support local students and classrooms, while also serving seniors through meals and social gatherings—often providing a vital source of daily nourishment.

The club proudly supports arts education and youth development, including funding visual arts programs and teaching CPR through Interact Club initiatives. Its signature Field of Honor event, held during Veterans Week, brings the community together to honor veterans, police, and firefighters through meaningful tributes and educational experiences.



# Staff Milestones.



**CHRISTOPHER GRAY**  
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chris is a seasoned executive with more than 30 years of experience in transportation planning and regional infrastructure. Since joining the Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) in 2016, he has led major initiatives, including the nationally recognized Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) Program. He also expanded WRCOG's grant efforts, helping secure more than \$67 million for member agencies and advancing early Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) strategies. A respected leader and longtime Riverside County resident, Chris remains committed to strengthening the region he serves.



**ANDREW RUIZ**  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Over the past 10 years, Andrew has served in key financial leadership roles, currently as Chief Financial Officer for the Agency. In this capacity, he has overseen complex budgets, strengthened fiscal controls, and ensured responsible stewardship of public funds. His leadership has supported operational efficiency, transparency, and accountability across programs. He remains committed to advancing the agency's mission through sound financial management and public service.



**CHRIS TZENG**  
MANAGER, PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

Chris has been part of the Transportation and Planning team at WRCOG for ten years. Chris spearheaded the Grant Writing Assistance Program that provides updates of grant opportunities to WRCOG members, as well as grant application development. Most recently, Chris has been involved with the development of the VMT Mitigation Program and its implementation. Chris hopes to continue providing useful assistance to the WRCOG members.

**10 Year  
Club**

**FARZAD HABIBI**  
ANALYST II

Farzad Habibi graduated from National University with an MBA, specializing in accounting and finance. Farzad's began his career with the WRCOG fiscal department as an analyst, where he worked on accounts receivable, accounts payable, bank reconciliations, and financial reporting processes. During this time, he helped improve the accuracy of financial reporting and strengthened key accounting procedures. He enjoys being part of a collaborative team focused on delivering reliable financial results, and looks forward to continuing to grow in governmental accounting while making meaningful contributions in the years ahead.



**MEI WU NGUYEN**

ANALYST- ENVIRONMENTAL/CLEAN CITIES PROGRAM

Mei Wu Nguyen began her journey with the organization as an intern while studying Public Policy at the University of California, Riverside. During her time with the Environmental & Energy team, she discovered a passion for the intersection of public service and environmental stewardship. Through programs such as Solid Waste Used Oil Recycling, Love Your Neighborhood, and Clean Cities, Mei enjoys building connections with community members and partners who share a commitment to sustainability and environmental protection. She finds the most meaning in working collaboratively to help ensure that future generations can continue to experience and enjoy the wonders our planet has to offer.



**GIA CHAVEZ**  
PROGRAM SPECIALIST

Over the past five years at WRCOG, Guillermina Chavez continues to grow, advancing from a temporary employee to a valued Program Specialist within the Energy & Environment team. She started by supporting the PACE program through high-volume customer service and later expanded her expertise by assisting property owners with refund-related inquiries. Throughout her time, she has contributed to initiatives such as the Used Oil Recycling and Love Your Neighborhood programs, supporting community-focused environmental efforts. Today, she plays a key role in maintaining accurate financial processes and supporting program operations for the Inland Regional Energy Network- I-REN.



**5 Year  
Club**



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# FISCAL YEAR 26/27 BUDGET AT A GLANCE

## TOTAL BUDGET\*



\* Excluding TUMF project revenue

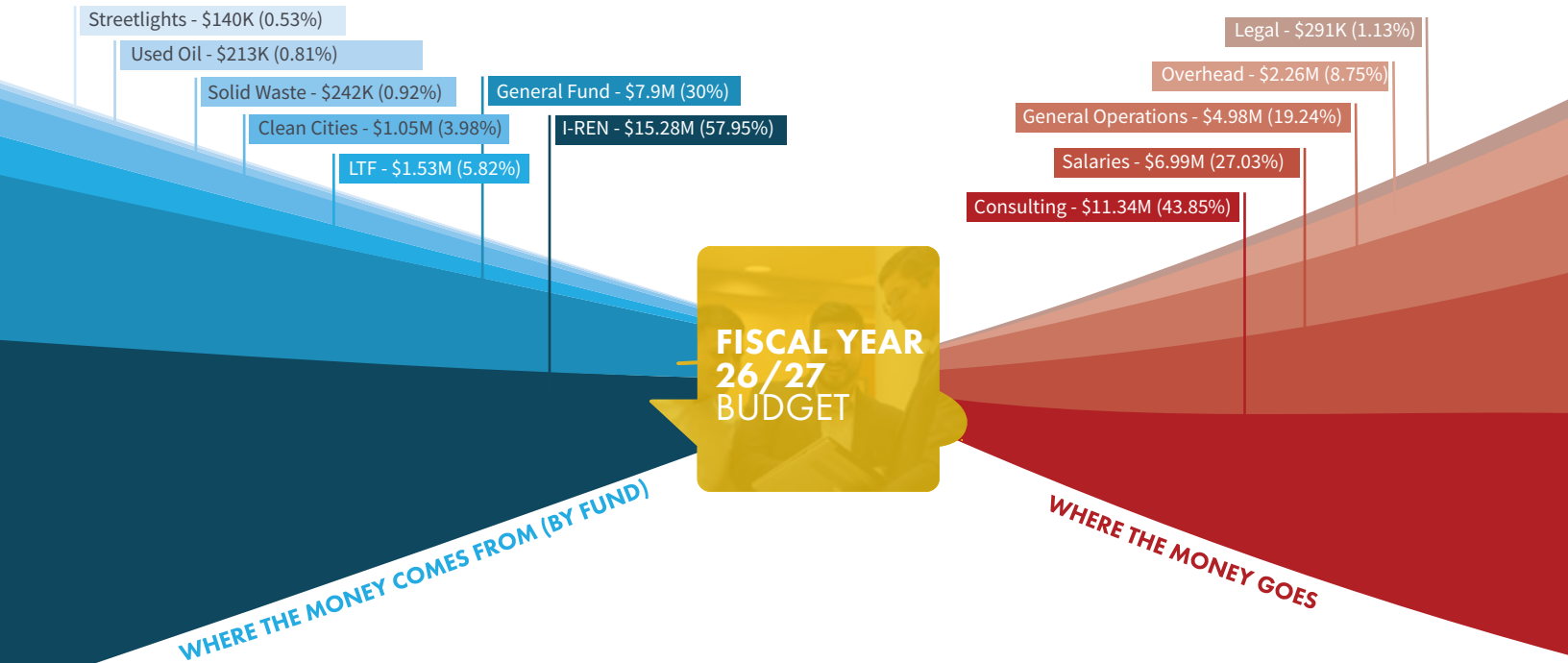
## AGENCY FISCAL GOALS

Ensure fiscal solvency and stability of the Western Riverside Council of Governments

- 1 Develop a process to vet fiscal impacts and potential risks for all new programs and projects.
- 2 Maintain sound, responsible fiscal policies.
- 3 Provide detailed financial statements for public review online.

## WRCOG'S STRATEGY

In addition to the Strategic Plan Goals, the Executive Committee directed a longer-term look at the Agency's finances to better identify and mitigate potential risks. This resulted in a fiscal modeling exercise that demonstrated the long-term fiscal health of each fund based on current activity, recessions, and other scenarios.



## BUDGETING PRINCIPLES

This year's budget was built on a set of guiding principles:

- Ensuring the fair distribution of funds and funding requests,
- requiring non-comprehensive programs (those which do not benefit the entirety of the member agencies) to be self-sustaining,
- focusing on the long-term health of each fund, and
- moving toward these goals in an incremental way when full scale immediate changes are impractical.



## TUMF PROGRAM

One of WRCOG's largest Programs and provides funding for transportation projects. Since its inception, over \$1 billion in TUMF projects has been funded.

**ANTICIPATED FUNDS FOR FY 26/27:**

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SCAN ME TO STAY INFORMED



# WRCOG's Fellowship Program

## Investing in the Future of Public Service.

WRCOG's Public Service Fellowship Program is a paid, nine-month opportunity for local college students to gain hands-on experience in government. Fellows are thoughtfully matched with host agencies across Western Riverside County, contributing to vital projects in areas like transportation and economic development.

Alongside their placements, Fellows attend WRCOG-led sessions focused on professional development and networking. The program bridges classroom learning with real-world impact, preparing students for meaningful careers in public service.



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"The WRCOG Public Service Fellowship gave me invaluable hands-on experience in the public sector. As a public administration graduate student, I had the privilege of working with the City of Menifee's Engineering Department, where I learned about land development, stormwater management, and regulatory processes. I'm grateful for the opportunity to grow professionally alongside such strong leadership."

**Teresa Aguilera**

WRCOG Fellow, City of Menifee

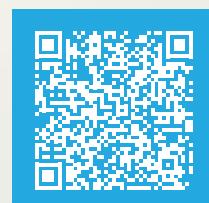
"Through this Fellowship opportunity, I have learned so much about myself through developing new skills like project management, project facilitation, and project implementation. I have been grateful to gain practical work experience working with public agencies, all while being able to make a positive impact within my local environment."

**Giovanni Valencia-Baxter**

I-REN Energy Fellow, Western Riverside Council of Governments

## HELP US CONTINUE THE MISSION

WRCOG believes in investing in our future leaders. By supporting this program, you are shaping the next generation of public servants who will lead our region. **If you'd like to donate to the cause and help expand the reach of this incredible program, please connect at the QR code to the right.**





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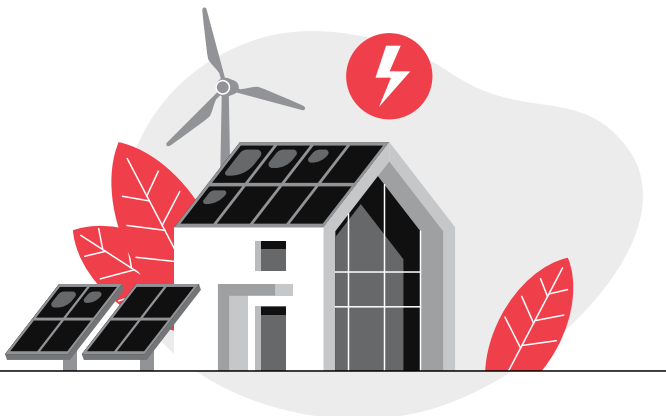


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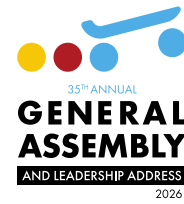
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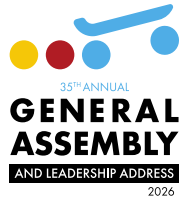
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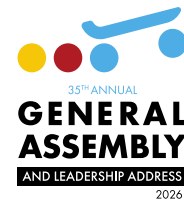


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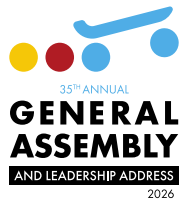
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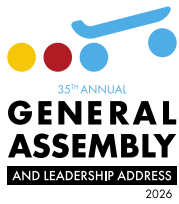
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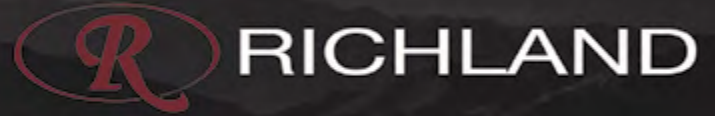


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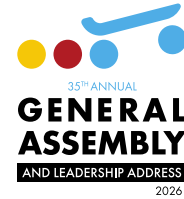
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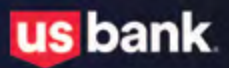
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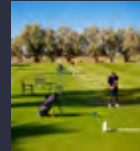
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