

AGENDA: February 5, 2004

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Linda Wilshusen, Executive Director
REGARDING: Appreciation Lunch and Transportation Awards Events

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee and staff recommend that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Consider implementing the next Appreciation Lunch and Transportation Awards event as a combined event to be held in a month other than December;
 2. Approve the proposed criteria for invitations to the next Awards/Appreciation event;
 3. Discontinue the practice of designating a Commissioner of the Year Award and a Staff Member of the Year Award at the Transportation Awards Event; and
 4. Direct staff to return to a later meeting with a recommendation on the timing for the Awards/Appreciation event, taking into consideration the state of the budget, work program and staffing
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BACKGROUND

In January 2003, the Commission decided to hold the Transportation Awards event every two years rather than annually. Therefore, the Awards Event was not held in 2003. Soon thereafter, the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee heard that the Auditor-Controller questioned the timing of the Annual Appreciation Lunch and a few of the invitees. The Committee decided to look at both the Transportation Awards Event and the Annual Appreciation luncheon and make recommendations to the RTC. While the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee was in the process of reviewing the events, the committee and staff decided not to hold an annual appreciation lunch in December 2003. A letter was sent to committee members thanking them for their work during 2003 (Attachment 1).

Transportation Awards Event

The Transportation Awards Program has been held annually for fourteen years, with the exception of 1991 and 2003. The purpose of the Awards Program is to honor those who

work in transportation as well as volunteers in the transportation field in Santa Cruz County over the previous calendar year. The Awards Program serves important Public Relations and Public Information functions. Most Awards Programs receive coverage in the media. The awards are drawn from nominations from the public, with the decision by a committee consisting of a Commissioner, a member of an RTC committee, and two other members with an interest in transportation issues. For the last few years the Transportation Awards Program was a morning reception held in front of the Capitola City Hall prior to the Regional Transportation Commission meeting. The awards events usually cost approximately \$1,500 to produce. Five years ago, the Commission held a lunch program for the 25th anniversary of the Commission.

Annual Appreciation Lunch

To thank the members of the RTC's committees, the Commission has held an Annual Appreciation Lunch (formerly called the Holiday Lunch) during December for several years. The cost is typically \$1,000 to \$1,200 for the event attended by approximately 70 people.

DISCUSSION

Proposal for Next Events

For the future, the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee and staff recommend that the Awards Program and Committee Appreciation be held as a combined event as a reception from 5 to 7 pm on a weekday evening. The combined event will save money while still meeting the objectives of the two events. Holding the event in the early evening would improve attendance by committee members and award winners.

This combined event would have the following objectives:

1. Thank committee volunteers: Most of the members of the Bicycle Committee and the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee are private citizens who serve without reimbursement of any kind.
2. Provide an opportunity for the various members of the RTC family to meet each other in an informal setting: Although the people on the recommended invitation list below all work for or with the RTC, many members of RTC committees have never met the Commissioners, members of other committees, or all the staff of the RTC and related organizations. The Appreciation/Awards event allows for the development of improved relationships away from controversial issues.
3. Highlight notable accomplishments in the field of transportation: Granting awards and certificates of appreciation to outstanding local projects, programs, groups and individuals thanks the individuals involved and communicates the innovations to the transportation community at the event and to the public at large through media exposure.

Criteria for Invitations to the Annual Awards/Appreciation Event

To respond to the Auditor-Controller's concern about invitees to the Annual Appreciation Lunch, the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee and staff clarified the people who would be invited to a combined Awards/Appreciation event:

1. Commissioners and Alternates who served over the prior year
2. Members and Alternates of RTC Committees and Project Development Teams (PDTs) who served over the prior year:
 - Interagency Technical Advisory Committee
 - Bicycle Committee
 - Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee
 - Expenditure Plan Subcommittee
 - Safe on 17 Committee
 - Traffic Operations System Committee
 - Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project Development Team
 - Highway 1 Widening Project Development Team
3. U.S. Congressmembers and State Legislators for the Santa Cruz County area
4. Current Award winners plus one guest each
5. RTC staff
6. On-going/multi-year consultants for the RTC (i.e., Bob Scott, Eileen Goodwin, Chris Metzger of Nolte Associates, Kirk Trost of Miller, Owen and Trost)
7. County staff involved in administrative relationships with the RTC
8. A staff representative from Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)

In addition, members of the media would be informed of the event and the awards through a press release.

Awards

At a previous Commission meeting, Commissioner Wormhoudt expressed the opinion that Commissioners and RTC staff should not be eligible to receive an award during the Awards Program. For prior award events, the Judging Committee had the option to give a Commissioner of the Year Award, and the RTC Executive Director had the option of recognizing a member of the non-management staff. Occasionally, an award has been given to a former Commissioner. Regarding the Staff Member of the Year Award, staff supports honoring that achievement outside of the Annual Awards/ Appreciation event. The Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee recommends discontinuing the designation of a Commissioner of the Year or a Staff Member of the Year at the Transportation Awards Event.

Timing of Next Awards/Appreciation Event

Due to budget constraints, priority projects and reduced staffing, the Budget Committee and staff recommend that the decision on when to hold the combined Annual

Appreciation/Awards Event be postponed to a later date. Staff will return at a later date with specific recommendations based on budget constraints, work program demands and available staffing.

SUMMARY

The Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee has discussed two events typically held by the RTC each year: the Transportation Awards Event and the Annual Committee Appreciation Lunch, formerly known as the Holiday Lunch. To save money and staff time and to respond to concerns expressed by the Auditor-Controller's Office, the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee and staff propose combining the Awards and Appreciation events as an evening reception not during the month of December. The Committee also developed criteria for the invitation list for the combined event, which was reviewed by the Auditor-Controller.

Attachment 1: Thank You Letter to Committee Members for Service during 2003

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