

Agenda: June 17, 2004

To: Regional Transportation Commission
From: Tegan Speiser, Sr. Transportation Planner
RE: Public Education and Outreach Effort for the Local Transportation
Sales Tax Measure Expenditure Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Review the memo from County Counsel on public official participation in public information for sales tax measures (Attachment 1);
 2. Review the report prepared by Eileen Goodwin of Apex Strategies on public information options for the Expenditure Plan (Attachment 2) and provide input on the options;
 3. Accept the attached updated fact sheets on the local transportation sales tax measure Expenditure Plan and on the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project (Attachments 3, 4 and 5); and,
 4. Direct staff to return to the Commission in August with a proposed budget and work plan for the public education program for the Local Transportation Sales Tax Measure Expenditure Plan.
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BACKGROUND

Now that the Ordinance and Expenditure Plan for the Local Transportation Sales Tax Measure is being finalized, it is time to turn the Commission's attention to the public information program for the measure's Expenditure Plan.

As a reminder, staff has attached County Counsel's memo to the Commission on the roles and limitations of public official participation in a public information program for a measure (Attachment 1).

In your FY03-04 budget, the Commission included \$50,000 for the purpose of a public education and outreach effort relating to the local transportation sales tax measure. At its June meeting, \$5,000 of this money was allocated to the consulting contract with Eileen Goodwin of Apex Strategies to assist with this work. In a separate agenda item for today's Transportation Policy Workshop meeting, staff recommends an additional \$10,000 be accorded to the Goodwin contract. This leaves \$35,000 for remaining public information tasks. An additional \$15,000 to \$20,000 in cost savings from foregoing a public opinion poll could be utilized instead for this public education effort. The result would be \$50,000 to \$55,000 potentially available for public education.

DISCUSSION

Public education is a key ingredient for any sales tax measure to succeed at the ballot box. However, there are a wide range of information programs that could be undertaken toward that end. Commission consultant Eileen Goodwin has prepared a memo that outlines three scenarios of public education efforts that reflect various levels of cost and activity (Attachment 2). This memo is intended to stimulate discussion and provide Commission staff with input about the preferences of Commissioners towards the public information program.

Staff asks for Commissioner input on the options. Staff will use this input to develop a recommended budget and work program for the public information program, to be presented to the Commission in August.

Out of necessity, the Commission has already been developing, updating and distributing fact sheets and other printed materials on Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening and the Local Transportation Sales Tax Measure Expenditure Plan (See Attachments 3, 4 and 5.) The materials have been updated based on the Commission's decisions through June 3rd. These materials provide a good foundation upon which to develop additional resource materials. Staff will always keep the most up to date fact sheets on the Commission's website.

SUMMARY

A multi-faceted public information effort will be needed for the Transportation Sales Tax Measure to succeed. Three scenarios outlining the scope and levels of various public education programs have been provided by consultant Eileen Goodwin to the Commission. Feedback from Commissioners regarding these ideas is essential for staff to return to the Commission in August with a proposed plan for a public education program on the Local Transportation Sales Tax Measure Expenditure Plan. Commission resources have been budgeted for this purpose.

Attachments:

1. Memo from County Counsel
2. Memo from Eileen Goodwin of Apex Strategies Regarding a Public Education Effort on the Local Transportation Improvement Measure
3. Updated Fact Sheet on the Local Transportation Sales Tax Measure Expenditure Plan
4. Updated Fact Sheet on Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening
5. Updated Spreadsheet on Estimated Project Costs & Funding for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project