

Agenda: August 19, 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 and approve the proposed public information workplan and budget for the Local Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan (Attachments 1 and 2);
 2. Direct staff to develop materials and implement the public information program approved by the Commission for the Local Transportation Sales Tax Measure Expenditure Plan;
 3. Designate two commissioners to review and approve printed public information materials before distribution;
 4. Direct staff to have county counsel review printed information materials prior to distribution; and,
 5. Approve a resolution (Attachment 4) authorizing the expenditure of up to \$55,000 for the public information effort for the Local Transportation Sales Tax Measure Expenditure Plan.
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BACKGROUND

At its June 17, 2004 Transportation Policy Workshop, the Regional Transportation Commission received a report outlining various educational efforts that could be undertaken to inform the public about the Expenditure Plan and Local Transportation Sales Tax Measure on the November 2004 ballot. Following a short discussion of this item, RTC staff was directed to return to the Commission in August with a proposed budget and workplan for the public education program for the Local Transportation Sales Tax Measure Expenditure Plan. The components of a public information program were also discussed and input provided by the Expenditure Plan Subcommittee at its August 2 meeting.

DISCUSSION

RTC's on-call consultant, Apex Strategies, presented three potential scenarios for a public information program reflecting various levels of cost and effort at the RTC's June Policy Workshop. The agenda item was intended to evoke input from Commissioners about their preferences towards a public information program.

The public information effort was also discussed by the Expenditure Plan Subcommittee at their August 2 meeting. While no specific activities were recommended by the subcommittee, the general feeling was that an aggressive public information program about the Expenditure Plan was warranted. This higher level of effort could include one or more printed pieces of literature mailed to all households, businesses and organizations in the county. The idea of printing extra copies of the mailing piece that could be used at speaking engagements and possibly inserted in various local publications was also received favorably. Additional low-cost public information activities such as speaking at meetings and forums, meeting with editorial boards and appearing on radio and television public affairs programs were also recommended.

Another aspect of the public information effort discussed by the Expenditure Plan Subcommittee focused on requesting a specific letter of the alphabet that would lend itself to communicating the subject matter for the transportation ballot measure. Upon receiving our inquiry, County Clerk Gail Pellerin replied that ballot letters cannot be selected, but are assigned using specific guidelines defined by County Clerk procedures and the state Elections Code. On August 6, 2004, County Clerk Pellerin announced that the November 2004 Transportation Sales Tax Ballot Measure has been assigned the letter "J." A list of all of the local ballot measures and their letter designations is included as [Attachment 3](#).

In addition to a variety of public information activities in advance of the election, staff has also researched conducting a post election poll in the event the ballot measure doesn't pass. Although additional resources would need to be identified and allocated to actually conduct a post election survey, \$2,500 has been included in the budget for the public information effort for work related to drafting the poll which would need to be done prior to the election. This would allow the questionnaire to be developed and in place in the event a post election poll is needed immediately following the election. In the meantime, staff will research options to fund the poll should that be necessary.

Based on feedback from the two meetings referred to above and the resources available in the FY04-05 budget, staff has proposed a workplan for the public information outreach effort in [Attachment 1](#). For the Commission's reference, staff has compiled a table of the recommended public information activities and costs associated with them in [Attachment 2](#).

Up to \$55,000 in the Commission's current FY04-05 budget is available for this public information effort. Additionally, as of August 1, \$7,900 is still available in the RTC's contract with on-call consultant Eileen Goodwin of Apex Strategies to work with RTC staff on the development and implementation of this Public Information Program. As a note, Ms. Goodwin is part of the consulting team that was recently selected to serve as Administrator to the Highway Construction Authority, which may affect her availability to the Commission.

SUMMARY

A public information effort is needed for the November 2004 Transportation Sales Tax Measure. Various activities have been identified that conform to the legal parameters placed on public official and public employee participation in efforts to educate the public about ballot measures. Commission resources have been budgeted for this purpose.

Attachments:

1. Proposed Workplan and Budget for the Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan Public Information Program
2. Summary of Recommended Public Information Program Activities and Related Costs
3. Email from County Clerk Gail Pellerin Regarding Assignment of Ballot Measure Letters
4. Resolution

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