

Agenda: October 7, 2004

To: Regional Transportation Commission
From: Linda Wilshusen, Executive Director
Re: Out-of-State Travel

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Approve out-of-state travel for the SCCRTC Deputy Director to travel to Washington D.C. in mid-January to meet with federal legislative staff and to attend the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board; and
 2. Approve out-of-state travel for Transportation Planning Technician Grace Blakeslee to present the paper, “*Go for Health!* Partnership – Supporting the Link Between Transportation Choices and Routine Physical Activity” at the annual Transportation Board meeting.
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BACKGROUND

Every year, the Executive Director or the Deputy Director makes a trip to Washington, D.C. for two reasons: to meet with the Washington-based staffs of our federal legislators; and to attend the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board (TRB), a division of the National Research Council. The SCCRTC Washington Assistant, Carolyn Chaney, schedules meetings each year during the TRB conference for the Executive Director/Deputy Director to discuss earmark requests and other federal issues related to transportation funding, planning and legislation. The annual TRB meeting is the foremost conference for transportation professionals, with sessions on the full range of transportation topics. Occasionally, a Commissioner or second staff person has also made the trip, especially during years when the Commission is requesting federal funds.

The Executive Director has been a member of the TRB Committee on Transportation Planning for Small and Medium-Sized Communities since 1990, which requires her attendance at the mid-year TRB meeting and the annual TRB meeting. She served as secretary to the committee from 1998-2004. In 1998 and again in 2002, the Commission approved out-of-state travel for the Executive Director to attend both the annual and mid-year TRB meetings during her term as committee member and secretary.

In September 2004, Grace Blakeslee of commission staff attended the TRB Transportation Planning Conference for Small and Medium-Sized Communities to serve on the panel discussing

Transportation and Health and present a paper titled, “*Go for Health!* Partnership – Supporting the Link Between Transportation Choices and Routine Physical Activity”. The paper highlights Santa Cruz County’s *Go for Health!* collaborative and their recently released countywide Childhood Obesity Prevention Plan, which includes action steps that link transportation children’s level of physical activity.

DISCUSSION

The annual Transportation Research Board (TRB) meeting will be held this year from January 10 to 13, 2005. Staff recommends that the SCCRTC’s Deputy Director travel to Washington, D.C. for the dual purpose of attending the meeting and meeting with legislative staff. The Commission will revisit its legislative agenda starting in December, and the Deputy Director and the Washington Assistant will discuss the Commission’s positions with legislative staff. They will also update the legislative staffs on the status of the Commission’s major projects.

The paper, "Go for Health! Partnership - Supporting the Link Between Transportation Choices and Routine Physical Activity" has been nominated as a Best Paper selection from the Transportation Planning Small and Medium-Size Communities to be presented at the January 2005 Annual TRB Conference in Washington D.C. Staff recommends that Transportation Planning Technician Grace Blakeslee travel to Washington DC to attend the annual TRB meeting and share with member communities Santa Cruz County’s cutting-edge work addressing the link between transportation choices, physical activity and childhood obesity.

As a cost savings measure in the FY04-05 budget, there are limited funds for travel and conferences. The cost for sending two people to the TRB conference is approximately \$3,000. There are adequate funds in the Commission’s travel and training budget for this trip.

SUMMARY

Consistent with prior years, staff recommends that a member of the SCCRTC management team be sent to Washington D.C. for the annual Transportation Research Board meeting January 10 to 13th, and to meet with federal legislative staff on the RTC’s legislative agenda and major projects. Staff also recommends authorization of out-of-state travel for Transportation Planning Technician Grace Blakeslee to present a paper at the annual Transportation Board meeting on the *Go for Health!* collaborative.