

AGENDA: June 29, 2006

TO: Regional Transportation Commission/Transportation Policy Workshop
FROM: Kim Shultz, Senior Planner *KS*
RE: Authorization to Release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a State Transportation/Legislative Strategist

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Review the draft Request for Proposals (Attachment 1) for a State Transportation/Legislative Strategist;
 2. Approve the draft RFP for release with revisions as appropriate; and,
 3. Authorize the creation of a Consultant Evaluation Committee and appoint 2 Commissioners to participate in the Committee.
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BACKGROUND

Due to severe financial constraints a few years ago, the RTC decided to delete its Sacramento Legislative Assistant from the budget. However, monitoring transportation-related legislative and administrative activity in Sacramento and advocating for funding have become both increasingly important and time consuming. Many regional transportation planning agencies and transit agencies across the state, including the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), have Sacramento legislative assistants under contract. In response to this potential need, the RTC approved a limited appropriation in its FY 2006/2007 Budget for a State Legislative Assistant. At the May RTC meeting, staff was directed to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify parties who could serve as Transportation/Legislative Strategists on state matters.

DISCUSSION

Staff prepared a RFP (Attachment 1) to help identify a consultant who can assist the RTC in pursuing state discretionary funds, and responding to new initiatives and programs proposed by the administration and/or the state legislature. As previously discussed, available funding to secure these services is constrained; therefore, staff will continue to participate with statewide organizations and expand the established working relationship with local elected officials and their staff.

To try to operate within the existing budget, or minimize the need for additional funding, staff prepared the RFP to attract an individual or firm that would provide information and strategic counseling rather than active advocacy and lobbying. The role of the State Transportation Legislative Strategist would be to provide an extended “eyes and ears” on issues of interest and concern to the Santa Cruz region. The Strategist will assist staff in identifying trends and nuances in the transportation and political arenas, and to report in a timely manner on the specifics and potential implications for the RTC. Services would also include advice and assistance on opportunities to build public-private partnerships to finance and implement regional projects and programs.

A statement of the desired services and expected qualifications is included on pages 2 and 3 of the RFP (Attachment 1). The statement of services and qualifications purposely avoids use of the term “registered lobbyist” to encourage a broad range of experienced and qualified personnel from which to choose and potentially fit within the constrained resources provided in the approved FY 06/07 budget. The proposed FY 06/07 budget provides \$25,000 for a Sacramento Assistant. This is a minimal amount in comparison to other transportation agencies such as TAMC and METRO which budgeted \$50,000 and \$30,000, respectively, for their Sacramento Assistants.

Staff recommends that the RTC review the draft RFP (Attachment 1) for a State Transportation/Legislative Strategist and approve its release with revisions as appropriate.

As stated in Section 11 of the RFP, the RTC reserves the right to not award a contract, should it determine that the proposals are not in the best interest of the RTC.

Staff proposes to release the RFP on Friday, July 7th, by posting the document on our website and mailing notification of its availability directly to legislative and strategic planning consultants currently in the RTC data base. Staff will supplement those contacts with additional names from METRO and the San Benito Council of Governments, both of which recently conducted a call for proposals for state transportation/legislative assistants. Per the schedule identified in Section 7 of the RFP, staff proposes to conduct a pre-proposal conference on Friday, July 28th, and has requested proposals be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 11th.

Consultant Evaluation Committee

Upon review and evaluation of the proposals, a determination can be made as to the appropriate level of support that best serves the RTC’s needs and the cost of those services. The criteria proposed to evaluate the proposals are listed in Section 10 of the RFP and listed in priority order and weighting.

To assist in the review of proposals, **staff recommends that the RTC authorize the creation of a Consultant Evaluation Committee to consist of 2 Commissioners, the RTC Executive Director, and the RTC Legislative Liaison, and appoint the 2 Commissioners to participate in the Committee.** The RTC may want to consider inviting another participant from an outside agency to participate in the Committee. The Committee will be tasked with the review of the written proposals, interviewing a short list of consultants, and making a recommendation as to

the appropriate course of action.

Per the schedule included in the RFP, interviews with a short list of consultants would be conducted the week of August 28, 2006. Subject to the recommendations of the Consultant Evaluation Committee, a recommended action could be presented to the RTC at the Transportation Policy Workshop scheduled for September 21st.

SUMMARY

Staff recommends that the RTC authorize the release of a RFP (Attachment 1) for a State Transportation/Legislative Strategist to assist in identifying trends and nuances in the transportation and political arena, and provide information and strategic counseling rather than active advocacy and lobbying. Staff recommends that the RTC create a Consultant Evaluation Committee and appoint 2 Commissioners to participate in the Committee tasked with evaluating the proposals. Per the schedule in the RFP, the Consultant Evaluation Committee will present its recommendation at the RTC's Transportation Policy Workshop on September 21st.

Attachments:

1. Request for Proposals for a Transportation/Legislative Strategist, June 29, 2006.

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