

AGENDA: September 21, 2006

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: George Dondero, Executive Director
RE: Monterey Bay Region Blueprint Grant

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Commission consider information provided by AMBAG staff regarding participation and support for AMBAG's application for a Caltrans grant to fund a Regional Blueprint plan to coordinate land use and transportation planning in Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties, and to determine if the Regional Transportation Commission will support and participate in the project.

BACKGROUND

In 2002 the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) initiated a planning process known as the Regional Blueprint. The goal was to look at various scenarios for future growth in the SACOG region and see what the region would look like in 2050. Incorporating various assumptions regarding priorities, density, environmental constraints, economic growth, and the transportation system, the project used Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to provide graphic feedback on how various assumptions would affect the region's future. In December 2004 the SACOG board adopted a preferred growth alternative. The document includes numerous guiding principles to assist decision makers when development and growth-related decisions are to be made, and some are intended to be adopted into a city or county general plan when updates are done. Participation by local agencies is voluntary.

Other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) around the state have or will soon begin work on regional blueprints similar to the SACOG model. The Secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, Sunne Wright McPeak has encouraged Caltrans to support blueprint efforts through a competitive grant program, funded at \$5 million annually statewide. Throughout her tenure, she has been a strong supporter of finding ways to better coordinate land use and transportation planning. There have been discussions suggesting that some funding programs could be tied to a region's completion of a regional blueprint, although to date, no formal action has been taken to do this. The Secretary will be leaving BT&H in January, so it is unclear how the blueprinting effort will proceed. That said, it is possible the current administration, if re-elected, will continue to support regional blueprints through some kind of funding incentives yet to be determined. The concept is currently being promoted through a series of workshops sponsored by the California Center for

Regional Leadership. The agenda for the September 13-14th workshop is provided as Attachment 4.

Last year AMBAG submitted a grant application to develop a regional blueprint for the Monterey Bay region. It was not funded, and the agency is submitting a new application this year. Senior Transportation Planner Todd Muck will make a presentation to the Commission explaining the project in more detail. His report, work scope and project budget are attached (Attachments 1, 2). A sample letter of support is also provided (Attachment 3).

DISCUSSION

The AMBAG proposal requests that the Commission support the application with a letter of support. The proposal also requests that the RTC provide staff time to meet the local match requirements of the grant, and is represented in the line item "In-Kind (Blueprint) at a total value of \$110,000 for all agencies participating in the project. The cost of the RTC portion of staff time is estimated at some portion of \$110,000, yet to be specified by AMBAG. The workscope provided does not provide enough detail to determine what level of effort will be needed by RTC staff, how the planning work will be coordinated and what the final product will provide to the land use and transportation planning agencies in the County. Staff does not question the merit of this effort to provide tools that would better inform and coordinate land use and transportation planning. However, before committing to the AMBAG proposal, it seems reasonable for the RTC to have information regarding:

- A more detailed scope of work
- A clear description of expected effort from RTC staff
- A more detailed budget, showing all participants, contributions and/or expected grant funds to be received

The project is scheduled to begin in February 2007 and end in December 2008, thus spanning two fiscal years. Currently no funds are included in the RTC budget for this project, and no portion of the grant funds are designated for the RTC. The total project cost is \$629,000.

Staff recommends that the RTC review and discuss the proposal and presentation, and give staff direction regarding participation in the project. If the RTC determines to support the project, staff will need to include funding in the upcoming RTC budget amendment to provide the in-kind match requested by AMBAG.

Attachments:

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| Attachment 1: | AMBAG Staff report |
| Attachment 2: | Scope of Work and proposed Budget |
| Attachment 3: | Sample Letter of Support |
| Attachment 4: | Blueprint Learning Network workshop agenda |