

REPORT TO SHASTA COUNTY RTPA

SUBJECT		MEETING DATE	ITEM NUMBER
Blueprint Study Grant		7/25/06	6

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Agency authorize the Executive Officer to apply for a State Blueprint Planning Grant.

SUMMARY

A State Blueprint Planning Grant is available to the RTPA. State and federal agencies encourage Blueprint studies to better guide transportation investment decisions through enhanced agency and public collaboration. Blueprint studies are not yet mandated, but increasingly are a prerequisite of receiving state and federal transportation funds. It is recommended that the Agency pursue the grant.

DISCUSSION

Blueprint studies are encouraged by state and federal transportation agencies. We have prepared the attached "Blueprint Fact Sheet" to explain study goals and benefits as they relate to our region. The Caltrans "Regional Blueprint Planning Program" web page is also attached.

Blueprint studies are aimed at reducing congestion and improving the economy consistent with community needs. With the aid of computer models, quantifiable performance indicators for traffic congestion, public investment needs, and the economy are compared under different growth scenarios. The state and federal goals are ambitious; however, it is recognized that the Blueprint grants are a first step, not an end-all to our growth challenges.

Blueprint studies are increasingly becoming a condition for RTPAs to receive state and federal transportation funds. For example, the Governor's Strategic Growth Plan Bond package on the November ballot contains significant funding grants weighted to, or only available to, projects consistent with Blueprint studies. Guidelines for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) - the RTPA's only source of discretionary transportation road improvement funds - are also being revised to promote consistency with Blueprint studies. The state's Blueprint grant represents an excellent opportunity to fund this effort now, rather than later with our general planning funds.

Blueprint grant applications are due in October and will be awarded in December. It is expected that \$250,000 will be available to the RTPA in the first year with comparable amounts available in subsequent annual cycles. The funds are good for two years; work covered in the first grant must be completed by December 2008.

Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration are sponsoring a Blueprint workshop in Chico on August 9 (see attached cover letter and flyer). All RTPA agency members and alternates have been invited.

Caltrans also sponsored a three-part Blueprint Learning Network for which all Agency members were invited. Agency member Goekler attended the first meeting in Sacramento. Agency member Mathena will also attend the final two sessions. Any other Agency members are welcome to participate.

It is recommended that the Agency direct staff to prepare a State Blueprint Planning Grant application. If successful, a final work plan will be presented to the Agency for approval.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

A Blueprint Training workshop in Sacramento was attended by RTPA Agency member, Dean Goekler; Caltrans District 2 Director, Brian Crane; Redding Development Services Director, Jim Hamilton; Tehama County RTPA Executive Officer, Gary Antone; and Shasta RTPA Executive Officer, Dan Little.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has reviewed this item and supports the recommendation.

FINANCING

If approved, grant funds would need to be placed in the RTPA's Overall Work Program (OWP). Like other federal planning funds, a 20% match is required which can consist of in-kind services such as local agency and RTPA staff time (reimbursed by state planning funds). City and county staff time may also be reimbursed by the RTPA.

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Officer

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Attachments: Blueprint Fact Sheet
 Regional Blueprint Planning Letter and Workshop Flyer
 Caltrans' Blueprint Web Page