



Item #06-4-27
Receive/File

SACOG Board of Directors

April 11, 2006

Air Quality Earmark for Citizen Engagement on Blueprint Project Update

Issue: Local agencies have been requested to submit a letter of interest for funding ideas to promote citizen engagement in the Blueprint Project.

Recommendation: Receive and file only.

Committee Action/Discussion: The Legislation & Public Affairs Committee received and filed this item. The attached memorandum has been distributed announcing the Air Quality Earmark for Citizen Involvement Funding Program to qualified local government agencies. The first round of this program was authorized by the SACOG Board of Directors in February to assist local governments with citizen involvement regarding Blueprint implementation. For this first round, the intent is to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach and experiment with a variety of ideas. SACOG has up to \$500,000 to allocate. This may be the first of five years.

Eligible jurisdictions include all 28 SACOG cities and counties, plus the five air quality districts and 13 transit districts in the six-county region. Copies of the memorandum were sent to the chief executive officer and/or planning director for each agency. Eligible agencies were asked to submit one page letters explaining their ideas for funding projects by April 14. From there, SACOG will develop application guidelines and a selection process for funding projects in this round.

Any use of these funds by recipient agencies will be structured in a manner that ensures awarded funding adds to, rather than supplants, current funding. In addition, the recipient agency must provide at least a 20% hard or soft match. All awarded projects would need to demonstrate an explicit linkage to benefiting air quality. Priority is given to planning projects underway or in the very near future, as well as citizen involvement techniques that show promise of being replicable in the subsequent years of the program.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever
Executive Director

Key Staff: Pete Hathaway, Director of Transportation Planning, (916) 340-6235
Greg Chew, Associate Planner, (916) 340-6227

MM:GC:ts

Attachment

March 27, 2006

To: SACOG Member Jurisdictions, Air Districts and Transit Operators
From: Mike McKeever, Executive Director
Subject: Upcoming Citizen Involvement Funding Program and Solicitation for Ideas

I am writing to make you aware of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) soon-to-be implemented Citizen Involvement Assistance Program. The SACOG Board recently authorized proceeding with the first round of projects to assist local governments and partners with citizen involvement regarding Blueprint implementation. The idea is to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. The Board has authorized \$500,000 for the first year experiment with this program. If considered successful, the Board may reauthorize the program in future years. The source of funds is a federal earmark sponsored by Senator Boxer for \$5 million over five years. The Board has tentatively dedicated half of these funds for the citizen engagement program.

We are seeking a one-page letter explaining what ideas you may have in mind. This is not the formal application, but rather a chance for SACOG to get a sense of the range of projects local governments are seeking.

The following are some of the conceptual program guidelines; they are subject to change when the final application guidelines are released.

- All 28 SACOG members in all six counties, transit districts, and air districts are eligible to apply.
- Any use of these funds would be structured in a manner to ensure that the money adds to, rather than supplants, current funding.
- The recipient agency would be required to provide a hard or soft match of at least 20%.
- All awarded projects would need to demonstrate an explicit linkage to air quality benefits.
- Priority would be given to planning projects underway or starting in the very near future, as well as to citizen involvement techniques that show promise of being replicable in the subsequent four years of the program.

Example program ideas are attached. Please send your one page idea responding to the above guidelines no later than April 14 to Greg Chew at gchew@sacog.org. Projects will NOT be evaluated for funding based upon these letters; rather, SACOG will evaluate the letters to develop the program and the application guidelines. If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to contact Greg at (916) 340-6227.

MM:GC:ts

Attachment

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EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR AIR QUALITY EARMARK

1. *Local governments updating their General Plan to address Blueprint principles who are seeking citizen input on the feasibility of doing this.* Examples of possible activities: 1) tailored educational materials such as maps, illustration and “before and after” three-dimensional graphics that depict the location and type of development that would be consistent with the Blueprint and clearly describe the linkages between the land use choices, travel behavior and air quality; 2) PowerPoint shows and speakers/facilitators to speak and answer questions at regularly scheduled meetings of neighborhood, civic, business and other organizations; and 3) interactive workshops with use of laptop computers and the Blueprint software to allow citizens to provide informed input on the best ways to implement Blueprint principles in their neighborhood and advise local governments where there are both opportunities and constraints to such development patterns. At least a half dozen SACOG members are at some stage of updating their General Plans right now; some are almost certain to have an interest in this type of assistance.
2. *Additional MTP workshops.* SACOG and its partners have scheduled 16 citizen involvement workshops on the MTP this spring. Some local governments may want additional workshops in their jurisdictions. Also, some non-governmental organizations (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, neighborhood associations, etc.) may want either complete or abbreviated workshops to help them develop informed opinions. These funds could be spent to support the staff work needed to organize, recruit attendance, and conduct the workshops as well as develop any specialized materials that are necessary to support them.
3. *State Implementation Plan and Long-Range Transit Plan workshops.* At the same time as the MTP process, the region’s 5 air districts and 13 transit districts are developing new long-range plans. Their issues have been integrated into the MTP process, but it is likely that additional education and outreach specific to the air quality and transit issues will be necessary. These funds could support the staff work needed to organize, recruit attendance, and conduct this outreach, as well as develop any specialized materials that are necessary to support them.
4. *Local government zoning codes updates, specific or community plans, and review of development proposals that relate to Blueprint implementation.* Many local governments are not in a General Plan update cycle right now. But they are actively working to implement Blueprint. The activities are varied: Some are updating codes and policies to change development and design standards to allow mixed use and more compact development; others are working on community or specific plans for transportation corridors, neighborhood or major development proposals; others are looking for ways to have a constructive dialogue with citizens, interest groups, and developers over specific development proposals that use some or all of the Blueprint principles. Some cities and counties are doing all of the above. In all cases, citizens need a way to be actively and constructively involved in the processes. These funds would support mapping, graphics, technical computer analysis, and people to assist in conducting meetings and workshops.

Note: Through this spring as funds are committed to the types of processes described above, SACOG would be working with the Board and staff from member and partner agencies to consider the feasibility of other ideas such as: 1) “Train the trainer” programs so that local and member agency staff as well as citizens and organizations that are regularly involved in planning issues develop the capacity to use the technical computer tools and interactive workshop techniques to conduct this type of citizen involvement on an on-going basis; and 2) Educational seminars and support materials on Blueprint principles and the basic principles and processes of land use planning for elected officials, planning commissioners and citizens. The Planning Academy course currently conducted by the City of Sacramento would be one model considered in this process.