



Strategic Planning Committee

January 5, 2009

Economic Stimulus Package

Issue: Efforts continue to identify potential near-term transportation infrastructure projects for consideration by the U.S. Congress in response to a likely Economic Recovery Act.

Recommendation: That the Strategic Planning Committee recommend that the Board support a policy of using existing funding mechanisms and allocation formulas consistent with the position taken by CalCOG and other MPOs throughout the state.

Discussion: Since our report to the Board in December, current speculation is that an economic recovery bill will be sent to the new president in February or March; however, President-elect Obama is still said to be planning to take “immediate action” upon taking office January 20. The 111th Congress will be sworn in on January 6 and is expected to meet sometime early in January to start work on the first in a series of economic recovery bills to have legislation ready for the new president’s signature on January 20. While the exact timeline is still far from certain, staff is working to ensure that the region is well-positioned to benefit from any action.

SACOG staff initially identified some possible candidate projects from the 2009 Project Delivery Plan and has been working closely with local cities, counties, transit operators, the state and other interested partners to identify other potential projects that could be ready to begin construction within 90 days, six months or one year.

While SACOG’s primary focus has been on transportation projects, in our role as the regional council of governments, we have also been working with a number of public agency and private sector representatives in the development of a list representing a broad range of infrastructure projects. We are coordinating our efforts with the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce (Metro Chamber) and our Congressional offices. The Metro Chamber will continue to track non-transportation projects, while SACOG will focus on the transportation projects. While SACOG’s list consists of 365 transportation projects, the Metro Chamber’s list includes well over 700 non-transportation projects. A combined list of all projects is being jointly prepared by our two groups.

Per the direction of the Board, staff is looking to work through existing processes and use the priorities already established in SACOG’s MTP and MTIP. Discussions with the California Association of Councils of Government (CalCOG) and our peer metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) throughout the state have been leading towards consensus on several issues. There is strong opposition to using federal economic recovery funds to backfill the state’s proposition 1B transportation projects—unless it includes a firm commitment from the state to pay back those funds. There is also support for using the state’s existing Surface Transportation Program (STP) allocation formula, which would direct about 70% of the funds to the state’s regions. All parties involved have also consistently opposed any potential earmarking of these funds.

Once a draft bill is released, staff will come back with further analysis and recommendation. For your information, attached is a one-page summary of transportation projects, along with our current list of candidate transportation projects.

Approved by:

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Attachments

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