



Innovation Task Force

August 14, 2014

New Opportunities

Issue: Report on new projects and opportunities SACOG is pursuing, including CivicSpark, Code for America (CfA), Strategic Growth Council Grant Round III (SGC3), and the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant.

Discussion: SACOG continues to look for opportunities to be innovative in conducting its work and providing services to our members. Currently, there are four projects that SACOG has either secured, is a partner on, or is awaiting approval for, that exemplify this innovative spirit. These projects encompass a variety of topics, ranging from MTP/SCS implementation to RUCS to climate resiliency, which SACOG staff view as member services. The projects, explained in more detail below, are CivicSpark, CfA, SGC3, and TIGER.

CivicSpark

The CivicSpark program is a partnership between the Local Government Commission and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, in collaboration with AmeriCorps. Over the next three years, CivicSpark will provide high-quality, technical support to local and regional partners, helping California communities pursue clean energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, safeguard against climate change impacts, and implement sustainable community strategies. The AmeriCorps employees are equivalent to an entry level professional position, and must have at least a bachelor's degree in a related field.

SACOG is working with the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District and the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District on creating a regional project focused on climate mitigation and resiliency. The project covers one calendar year, with the option of adding up to two additional years, and includes six full time AmeriCorps employees. SACOG has committed to including a climate adaptation analysis as part of the MTP, and CivicSpark will provide much of the background research and analysis needed to inform this work. Staff will consult with the Board to shape this work before the project begins, and provide updates throughout the process.

Code for America

CfA is a non-profit that helps residents and governments harness technology to solve community problems. One program CfA has established is the Fellowship. The Fellowship is a service-year program where civic-minded developers, designers, and product managers create small start-up teams and partner with a local government for a year-long collaboration. Selected local governments host a team of Fellows, to work with government staff to build apps, foster new approaches to problem solving throughout government, and tackle issues the community is facing. In the past, teams have worked on improving access to social services, alternatives to incarceration, and new avenues for public input.

SACOG partnered with the City of West Sacramento on applying to the 2015 Fellowship program for a regional RUCS related project. Awardees will be announced at the September CfA Summit in San Francisco. If selected, SACOG staff will work with West Sacramento staff, regional partners, and CfA on crafting a project that has benefit for the entire region.

Strategic Growth Council Grant – Round Three

The SGC3 program is funded by Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006. The Legislature was authorized to appropriate \$90 million for planning grants and incentives that achieve sustainability objectives.

SACOG applied for funding in two main areas: 1) public health and active transportation, and 2) technical assistance for MTP/SCS implementation. This latter focus of the SGC3 grant would extend to any interested members a technical assistance program in which SACOG and three of its members recently participated. This program, the Portland State University (PSU) Urban Sustainability Accelerator, has proven to be a low-cost, high-value technical assistance program for the City of Elk Grove, the City of Rancho Cordova, and Sacramento County, all of whom are addressing challenges of implementing suburban corridor and main street revitalization plans. The PSU program draws from many private and public sector experts and university departments. The latter category includes PSU's Center for Public Interest Design, which specializes in revitalization in low-income communities. Because the PSU program includes participant cities from around the country, it also gives the region opportunity for cross-pollination with a broader network of mid-sized regions that are also focused on accelerating urban, suburban and small town revitalization. If awarded, SACOG staff will outreach to members to assess individual interest in participating.

TIGER

TIGER discretionary grants provide an opportunity for the Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) to invest in road, rail, transit and port projects that promise to achieve critical national objectives. In this, the sixth round of TIGER grants, DOT received grant applications totaling \$9.5 billion, at least 15 times the \$600 million set aside for the program.

SACOG proposed a \$900,000 regional planning grant application for TIGER that looked at corridor and infill reinvestment strategies. Specifically, the proposal was to develop a state of the art interactive open data and technical assistance center that provides access to small area analysis tools developed through SACOG's Rural-Urban Connections Strategy, Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, and Blueprint programs. The center would provide unprecedented access to MPO planning, data tools and technical assistance to assist struggling suburban, rural and urban communities in prioritizing the most critical infrastructure needs for implementing local and regional economic revitalization strategies. The project would convene a multi-jurisdictional Corridor Working Group composed of planning, public works and economic development staff, and others to help shape the methodology and area typologies for local use. The project would also include support from corridor revitalization, transit, and/or traffic engineering experts to help jurisdictions phase and prioritize infrastructure investments to retrofit key corridors to maintain a state of good repair, increase economic competitiveness, improve quality of life, address modal conflicts, increase corridor safety, and reduce VMT, fuel use and GHG emissions. If awarded, this project would further the goals set out in SGC3 and strategic priorities for MTP/SCS implementation.

Staff will return to the Task Force and Board for updates on each of these opportunities.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever
Chief Executive Officer

MM:RP:gg

Key Staff: Rebecca Sloan, Director of External Affairs and Member Services, (916) 340-6224
Raef Porter, Senior Analyst, (916) 340-6261