



**Land Use and Natural Resources  
Committee**

**Meeting Date:** 10/4/2018

**Agenda Item No.:** 2018-October-2.

**Subject:** Rural-Urban Connections Strategy 2.0 Workplan (Est. time: 10 minutes)

**Information**

**Prepared by:** David Shabazian

**Approved by:** Kacey Lizon

**Attachments:** Yes

**1. Issue:**

The Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) team is proposing the first phase of a RUCS 2.0 workplan for Fiscal Year 2018-2019.

**2. Recommendation:**

None, this is for information only; however, committee input on the draft workplan is requested.

**3. Background/Analysis:**

SACOG initiated the RUCS program in 2008 to better incorporate rural challenges and opportunities - as well as the connection between the rural and urban parts of the six-county region - into regional planning. In March 2018 staff proposed exploring the next phase of RUCS, or RUCS 2.0, with the intent of focusing on how to apply existing RUCS tools, implement strategies, and identify new areas of research. With committee direction, staff moved forward with a RUCS 2.0 outreach process designed to help SACOG determine the next phase of this program.

The outreach process began with a board workshop luncheon in April, to gather input on topics, initiatives, and services that RUCS should target. Additional engagement included stakeholder outreach interviews and surveys with local farmers, natural resource managers, processors, retailers, and local economic development staff. This was followed by the formation of an advisory committee, and a retreat for project staff and the advisory committee. Last month, the SACOG board provided further direction to staff, which will be incorporated into a revised RUCS 2.0 Theory of Change and workplan. In the meantime, staff is proposing the first phase of a workplan, which includes projects that are already underway or could begin soon.

**4. Discussion/Analysis:**

The workplan included as Attachment A reflects projects that align with the recommendations resulting from the board and stakeholder engagement process. Staff is proposing this list as phase one of the larger RUCS 2.0 workplan that will result after staff has incorporated board comments and recommendations from the September meeting. The four elements of the workplan include:

- Creating a RUCS overlay for the 2019 transportation funding round;
- Assisting with the agriculture and food industry cluster component of the Regional Prosperity Plan resulting from the Brookings report and recommendations for economic development;
- Conduct at least one tour to highlight regulatory challenges that will inform a state level policy reform agenda;
- Assist with local infrastructure initiatives that align with RUCS implementation (e.g., Live Oak food hub, Sutter County broadband network deployment);

### **5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:**

The RUCS 2.0 strategy and work plan development is included as part of the current Overall Work Plan and budget. Implementation costs for the RUCS 2.0 workplan are planned to be partially covered through SB1 planning funds and additional resources that will need to be generated through sources such as state and federal grants, etc.

### **6. This staff report aligns with the following SACOG Work Plan Goals:**

1. Advance Economic Prosperity, 5. Establish the Sacramento Region as an Innovator and Test-Bed for New Ideas

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Description

Attachment A - Draft RUCS Workplan

## **D R A F T Phase 1 RUCS 2.0 Workplan**

September 26, 2018

### **1. Creating a RUCS overlay for the 2019 transportation funding round**

Responding to board direction to include RUCS-related projects in the upcoming funding round, staff will develop a program for solicitation and evaluation of projects that support and enhance rural economic vitality.

- Staff: Renee DeVere-Oki; David Shabazian
- Timeline:
  - October-November 2018: develop project calendar and address high-level program questions.
  - November 2018: start on program development with call for projects in April (Estimate based on existing programs).
- Deliverables:
  - Call for projects program for RUCS-related transportation projects

### **2. Assisting with the agriculture and food industry cluster component of the Prosperity Plan**

The recent Brookings report and recommendations for economic develop highlight the agriculture and food industry cluster and a key tradable sector that the SACOG region should further develop. SACOG offers stakeholder networks and technical work to support crafting a strategic plan process and products.

- Staff: David Shabazian; Lynnea Ormiston
- Timeline:
  - October- November 2018: Supplemental market assessment to establish baseline conditions for the industry cluster. This assessment will be complimented with stakeholder interviews that will identify opportunities and challenges.
  - December 2018 – January 2019: Economic prosperity strategy and concept development for the agriculture and food industry cluster.
  - February 2019: Draft plan vetted, and final plan completed.
- Deliverables:
  - Prosperity plan for the agriculture and food industry cluster.

### **3. Conduct at least one tour to highlight regulatory challenges that inform a policy agenda**

During the RUCS 2.0 kitchen cabinet workshop, stakeholders suggested that SACOG conduct tours of rural areas in the region, similar to tours conducted between 2008 and 2010, which were designed

to inform the SACOG board on rural opportunities and challenges. The stakeholders suggested that new tours emphasize regulatory issues and possible advocacy for reform.

- Staff: David Shabazian; Christina Lokke; Communications team
- Timeline:
  - March 2019: Interview rural stakeholders for tour topic ideas
  - April-May 2019: Work with possible tour locations on logistics and draft tour itinerary
  - June 2019: Conduct tour
- Deliverables:
  - A tour of rural locations that emphasize regulatory issues that can be included in a state and federal policy agenda.

#### **4. Assist with local initiatives that align with RUCS implementation**

This task is included to assist local jurisdictions with RUCS-related projects, as needed. Projects such as the prison conversion to a food hub in Live Oak and Sutter County's broadband network deployment are examples where local staff and elected officials may seek assistance from SACOG.

- Staff: David Shabazian
- Timeline:
  - Ongoing and on an as-needed basis.
- Deliverables:
  - SACOG technical, strategic, or policy assistance with local initiatives.