Subject: Civic Lab Year Two (Est. time: 5 minutes)

1. Issue:
Should SACOG focus the second year of Civic Lab on the issues and challenges surrounding the region's struggling commercial corridors?

2. Recommendation:
The Land Use and Natural Resources Committee recommends that the Board of Directors direct SACOG staff to pursue commercial corridors as the topic for Civic Lab year two.

3. Background/Analysis:
The Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) combines a robust transportation system with an efficient land use pattern to model the goals of economic prosperity, reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. One way for this to occur is to make places that are accessible to everyone--places where people want to live, work, shop, and play.

Commercial corridors throughout the region have the basic components necessary to accommodate the goals of the MTP/SCS. However, due to disruptions to local planning efforts, some commercial corridors struggle to be the vibrant places that contribute to the region's goals. Disruptions like the changing nature of retail, and the economics of infill and redevelopment have made it difficult for some of these areas to thrive.

The MTP/SCS relies on vibrant commercial corridors in order to meet its goals of economic prosperity, cleaner air, lower VMT, and lower GHG emissions. The plan adopted in 2016 had 30% of the growth in housing units, and 35% of the growth in employees by 2035 in centers and corridors. These corridors exist in all cities and counties in the region. Urban, suburban, and rural areas alike are trying to figure out how to revitalize commercial corridors.

4. Discussion/Analysis:
The overarching goal of Civic Lab is to provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions on an issue of regional importance that is best addressed at the local level. This is done by testing new and innovative solutions to the challenges associated with the topic of choice. Teams are formed to work on specific projects to define an issue and come up with its solution. SACOG will work to identify funds to test the solutions these teams develop.

The first year of Civic Lab focused on the issues surrounding disruptions in mobility. Teams worked on projects ranging from microtransit to autonomous vehicles to ridesharing. These mobility solutions work best if they have good land use underpinning them. SACOG has been asked how it can help envision and test new ways to revitalize commercial corridors, given the challenges many of them face. Are there viable financial and political models that can help the region meet the infill and redevelopment goals set forth in MTP/SCS?

Based on input from SACOG member jurisdictions and partner agencies, as well as conversations at the Regional Futures Forum, SACOG staff have been exploring issues for a second year of Civic Lab. The challenge of commercial corridors align the goals of SACOG and Civic Lab with the needs of members and partners. Issues for exploration could include (but are not limited to): vacant parcels, absentee ownership, aging infrastructure, market analysis, cohesive visioning, displacement and gentrification, and economic feasibility. While outcomes for Civic Lab are not predefined, solutions to these and other challenges could include (but not limited to): replacements for redevelopment funds, market and economic analyses, permit streamlining, and tactical design and marketing.

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:
The cost to conduct Civic Lab includes staff time, workshop logistics, speakers, consultants, and vendors. This work is budgeted through fiscal year 2018-2019. Depending on the outcomes of the projects, additional funds to implement the projects may be needed. As we did in Civic Lab Year One, staff will work with the project teams and the board on securing funds for the pilots, as needed.

This staff report aligns with the following SACOG Work Plan Goals:
#3 - Assist Local Economic Development Strategies
#5 - Establish the Sacramento Region as an Innovator & Test-Bed for New Ideas