



SACOG Board of Directors

Item #15-5-8
Consent

May 14, 2015

Downtown/Riverfront Streetcar Environmental Approval

Issue: Should the SACOG Board delegate authority to the Transportation Committee for the approval of an environmental study completed for the Downtown/Riverfront Streetcar project?

Recommendation: The Transportation Committee recommends unanimously that the Board delegate to the Transportation Committee authority to certify that it has reviewed the environmental study for the Downtown/Riverfront Streetcar and find that that it complies with federal requirements for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and state requirements for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Committee Action/Discussion: A project-level Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) for NEPA and Negative Declaration for CEQA has been prepared for the Downtown/Riverfront Streetcar project. While the Transportation Committee staff report incorrectly stated that an Environmental Impact Statement for NEPA and Environmental Impact Report for CEQA had been completed, there is no substantive change in the environmental review responsibility that the Transportation Committee will fulfill.

NEPA and CEQA require that local government agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority before taking action on those projects. Although the Downtown/Riverfront Streetcar Project is a joint effort of several public agencies, SACOG is the lead agency for the purpose of preparing the environmental review of this proposed project. The IS/EA and Negative Declaration has been prepared by SACOG pursuant to NEPA and CEQA requirements and is anticipated to be released soon for public comment.

In order to meet schedule demands for the timing of project expenditures, the timely approval of the Downtown/Riverfront Streetcar environmental document is needed. The fact that there is no regular meeting of the SACOG Board and policy committees between June 18 and August 7 is a complication that can be remedied by holding a special meeting of the Transportation Committee during this time frame. Staff will schedule the special meeting on a date with the fewest possible conflicts and will offer a call-in option.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever
Chief Executive Officer

MM:KT:ds

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