



**Government Relations and Public
Affairs Committee**

Meeting Date: 8/6/2018

Agenda Item No.: 2018-August-8.

Subject: Upcoming Opportunities for Technical Assistance: Civic Lab
Commercial Corridors and Rural Main Streets (Est. time: 5 minutes)

Information

Prepared by: Greg Chew

Approved by: Erik Johnson

Attachments: No

1. Issue:

Much of the SACOG region has commercial corridor development that has seen declines pre- and post-recession. In order to support our regional economy and MTP/SCS implementation, SACOG is providing technical assistance to spur creative revitalization in these uniquely challenged areas.

At the August Land Use & Natural Resources Committee meeting two experts will discuss economic and community revitalization along commercial corridors and SACOG staff will share information on two land use and housing technical assistance opportunities for SACOG member cities and counties.

2. Recommendation:

None, this item is for information only.

3. Background/Analysis:

In June, the SACOG board directed staff to focus Civic Lab Year 2 on commercial corridor revitalization. Like the inaugural year of Civic Lab, cross-sector teams will apply with an unresolved challenge, and participate as a cohort to develop a solution that leverages new partnerships and tests new solutions.

Earlier this summer, Caltrans awarded SACOG a State Transportation Planning Grant to provide technical assistance to revitalize main street commercial corridors of rural communities in the region. This new program is called the Rural Main Streets Program.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

Civic Lab Year 2: Staff will facilitate a series of workshops where teams, local and national experts, and selected vendors will dive deep into what makes an area vibrant. Topics such as housing; intensification of use; building and property reuse; temporary tactical uses; and, street and building design will be explored.

Over the summer months, SACOG staff will be getting the word out to local cities and counties on the Civic Lab Year 2 program, benefits of participation, and the application process. Staff anticipates releasing applications in late August, with applications due in late September. The Civic Lab Year Two program will begin in late 2018.

Rural Main Streets Program: The Rural Main Streets Program will share some of program elements of Civic Lab Year 2, in order to expand the resources being brought to the region. Rural Main Streets will also work with local teams and focus on housing, intensification of land uses and similar topics. National experts including Michele Reeves from Civilis Consultants, Portland State University's Urban Service Accelerator Program (USA), and the Local Government Commission are all available resources to rural communities. Rural Main Streets and Civic Lab Year 2 will hold joint workshops and seminars and site tours.

Six rural communities, which had requested technical assistance through a prior grant program in the past three years, will continue to receive technical assistance through the Main Streets Program. SACOG is also soliciting interest from our other rural jurisdiction members.

The key differences between the two programs are that the SACOG board has committed to identifying funding for successful pilots that come out of Civic Lab, and that Civic Lab has the ability to be agile and adapt the curriculum based on participant evaluation and feedback.

Guest Speakers: At the August 2, Land Use & Natural Resources meeting, community revitalization consultant Michele Reeves will share some of the low and moderate cost approaches for revitalizing main streets and commercial corridors. She will be joined by Larry Kosmont, a development consultant from southern California, who will share some of his experiences.

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

SACOG staff time is in the adopted budget. Pilot projects developed through Civic Lab will be seeking funding from different sources, including SACOG's funding rounds and outside sources. The Rural Main Streets grant from Caltrans will pay for SACOG staff time and consultants and has been programmed into the adopted budget. This Caltrans grant is funded through SB 1 and contingent on the continuation of SB 1 funding.

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

3. Assist Economic Development Strategies