



Legislation Text

File #: 16-1113, **Version:** 1

Community Development Agency, Long Range Planning Division, recommending the Board:

- 1) Submit a letter of endorsement for Sacramento Area Council of Governments' Grant Proposal for the Senate Bill 743 Implementation Tools for Local Agencies Project under the State of California Department of Transportation's Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program, Strategic Partnerships; and
- 2) Approve El Dorado County being listed as a partner in Sacramento Area Council of Governments' Grant Application.

FUNDING: N/A

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Community Development Agency (CDA), Long Range Planning Division (LRP), recommending the Board:

- 1) Submit letter of endorsement for Sacramento Area Council of Governments' (SACOG) Grant Proposal for the Senate Bill (SB) 743 Implementation Tools for Local Agencies (SB 743 Implementation Tools) Project under the State of California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program, Strategic Partnerships; and
- 2) Approve El Dorado County being listed as a partner in SACOG's Grant Application.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

On September 27, 2013, Governor Brown signed SB 743 (Steinberg, 2013). SB 743 creates a process to change how transportation impacts are analyzed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for transit oriented infill projects, judicial review streamlining for environmental leadership development projects, and an entertainment and sports center in the City of Sacramento.

Under SB 743, the focus of transportation analysis shifts from driver delay to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, creation of multi-modal networks, and promotion of a mix of land uses. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) shall prepare, develop, and transmit to the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency for certification and adoption, proposed revisions to the guidelines adopted pursuant to Section 21083 establishing criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts of projects within transit priority areas (Section 21099 (b) (1)). In addition, OPR may adopt guidelines pursuant to Section 21083 establishing alternative metrics to the metrics used for traffic, i.e. Level of Service (LOS), for transportation impacts outside transit priority areas (Section 21099 (c) (1)).

OPR circulated draft revisions to the CEQA Guidelines in 2014. These initial draft guidelines proposed the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) metric in the place of LOS for every jurisdiction in California, even if a transit priority area does not exist. Nearly 200 comment letters were submitted to OPR, many objecting the expansion of the use of the VMT metric to determine transportation impacts under CEQA. Jurisdictions without significant access to alternative modes of transportation do not have the tools or the research to determine the tools needed to mitigate increased VMT for development projects. A *"Revised Proposal on Updates to the CEQA Guidelines on Evaluating*

Transportation Impacts in CEQA,” was published by OPR in January 2016. Once again, a significant number of comment letters were submitted. El Dorado County’s main objection is the application of urban metric standards to the County’s rural areas.

In July 2016, SACOG established the SB 743 Local Agency Working Group to discuss the latest version of the revised CEQA guidelines, how local agencies anticipate applying the guidelines, and opportunities for collaboration moving forward. Although the final revisions to the CEQA guidelines have not been published, it appears the VMT metric will be replacing LOS as the criteria for transportation impacts under CEQA. Previous versions indicated local jurisdictions will have up to two years to implement these changes.

At the SB 743 Local Agency Working Group meeting on October 4, 2016, SACOG staff proposed applying for a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program (Strategic Partnerships) grant to hire a consultant to assist the SB 743 Local Agency Working Group. The grant would fund a study to reduce the cost and risk of SB 743 implementation by a collaborative development of analysis tools for VMT estimation for jurisdictions within the SACOG region, and develop documentation including a “user guide” for those tools. Case studies would be used to create a consistent set of modeling and analysis tools and guidance for use by local agencies within the SACOG region for SB 743 implementation. The work would focus on developing a consistent definition for VMT for use in SB 743 implementation, calibrating and adjusting the available tools to provide internally consistent estimates of VMT based on that definition, and developing guidance for the tools for any agency to use.

NEXT STEPS

If SACOG’s Grant Application is selected for a grant award, as a partner in this Grant Proposal, El Dorado County would be required to pay a fair share portion of the required match for the Grant, not to exceed \$10,000. County (CDA) staff would serve a technical advisory function for the project. Tasks may include reviewing the RFP, evaluating the consultant proposals, and reviewing consultant deliverables.

If SACOG’s Grant Application is not selected for a grant award, County staff would continue to participate in the SB 743 Local Agency Working Group. County staff would need to conduct further research on SB 743 analysis and possible mitigation measures under CEQA. However, the expense of conducting this research as an individual agency would far outweigh the cost of partnering with SACOG on this grant proposal. County staff would continue to look for grant funding for future research.

ALTERNATIVES

The County could choose not to partner with SACOG on this Grant Proposal.

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The following agencies are involved: CDA (LRP, Transportation, and Development Services Divisions), SACOG, El Dorado County Transportation Commission, and the City of Rancho Cordova.

CAO RECOMMENDATION

Approve the Department's recommendation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact at this time. If SACOG is awarded a grant, the County would contribute matching funds not to exceed \$10,000 during fiscal year 2017/2018.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

- 1) Obtain the signature of the Chairman on the endorsement letter to SACOG;
- 2) Forward signed endorsement letter to the CDA Director for submittal to SACOG. Submittal of the letter is needed prior to November 3, 2016.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Infrastructure: The SB 743 Implementation Tools Project will address how to analyze, under CEQA, the needed road improvements using vetted regional standards. Road improvements are needed to maintain LOS standards as required by General Plan policies and as part of the Infrastructure component of the County Strategic Plan.

Good County Governance: The County's participation and partnership in SACOG's Grant Proposal supports the County's strategic goal to achieve the best possible process for making and implementing decisions.

CONTACT

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