

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
September 15, 2005
9:30 A.M.

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Department of Planning and Community Development

Subject: Report Back Concerning Request For Additional Funding For Commercial Corridors

Contact: Robert Sherry, Director, 874-6141

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Planning and Community Development (Planning) was asked to report back to your Board and provide information on:

Commercial Corridor Study allocation of \$500,000 and how the use of those funds might be specifically directed to achieve results in Fiscal Year 2005-06, identification of specific projects that will be addressed within Fiscal Year 2005-06.

DISCUSSION:

The objectives of the commercial corridor program are:

- w To eliminate blight in an existing older commercial corridor within the unincorporated County.
- w To ensure that public and private investment in the corridor contribute to community identity and the creation of a sense of place.
- w To achieve “smart growth” and “SACOG Blueprint” objects, or in other words create vital streetscapes that are walkable and livable, with a mix of retail, housing and some employment and that allow multiple transportation mode choices including auto, transit, pedestrian and bicycle modes.
- w To attract new business and improve conditions for existing businesses while also increasing tax revenue to the unincorporated County.

A key factor in the development and design of this program is to accomplish tangible products and results. Planning has experienced much in the development and preparation of policy-oriented Community Plans in the '70s and '80s followed by Specific and Comprehensive Plans for large new growth areas in the '90s and on, and has participated in several more recent Community Action plans. This proposed program most closely resembles a Specific or Comprehensive Plan project, for which costs in the 1990s ranged from just under \$1 million to over \$2 million dollars. Those Specific and Community Plan projects included preparation of a land use plan with implementing ordinances and for some projects – design guidelines, community outreach, infrastructure planning (typically the most costly component of the project for consultant studies), and environmental documentation.

The types of work products best envisioned for the use of the \$500,000 for this commercial corridor program would include:

- w Commercial corridor assessment including a parcel survey.
- w Public and business outreach.
- w Enabling zoning ordinance and design guidelines (form-based approach).
- w Economic development strategy and materials.
- w Technical services analysis including road and transit, physical infrastructure, and public service analysis.

Note: Planning will be pursuing grant funding through Caltrans Community Based Transportation Planning Grant program and SACOG's Community Design program to augment cost associated with commercial corridor planning. The department feels there is some likelihood that funding will be granted.

The department has identified two alternative approaches for which to use the funding for 2005-06.

Alternative A: The County could identify geographically smaller, more targeted areas along a larger commercial corridor and focus on efforts and activities to generate private residential, commercial and employment activities and uses.

Alternative B: Funding could be directed toward a countywide approach, particularly given an assumed constrained budget with no ability to augment the initial \$500,000 in future budget years. Initial work could focus on further defining and prioritizing the countywide strategy and evaluating and prioritizing the corridors. These funds could also be combined with funding already identified for the Zoning Code and Design Guidelines projects to develop countywide mixed-use and/or form-based zoning approaches to corridor development. This effort would emphasize the land use planning aspects of the project (over infrastructure and service analyses and economic development strategies) but on a countywide basis.

Recommended Approach: The department recommends Alternative "A", and that the Board selects a single corridor to focus efforts by County departments, to include Planning, Transportation, and Economic Development along with appropriate outside consultants. Initiation of this effort should include:

- w Identify several top commercial corridors for evaluation.
- w Review and revise suggested criteria (following later in this report).
- w Discuss and establish priority outcomes.
- w Select a project for implementation.

To identify potential candidate corridors, Planning suggests the review of the following existing studies and reports. Too, a corridor might be chosen from those projects currently being worked on by SHRA.

Corridor Conditions and Opportunities Assessment

Produced by Sacramento County Planning and Community Development Department

This report provides an inventory of existing land uses, revitalization potential, and new development potential for twelve corridors and corridor segments in Sacramento County. Key data offered in this report includes an inventory of vacant and underutilized acreage within each corridor, total square footage of existing retail, office and industrial uses, as well as significant land use planning considerations including strengths and weaknesses of the locality.

Sacramento County Commercial Corridor Analysis

Produced by Sacramento County Economic Development Department

This report profiles eighteen major transportation corridors from an economic development perspective, with an emphasis on retail commercial activity. This profile-based system used economic and demographic performance indicators that were applied uniformly to all of the corridors so that they could be compared with one another. Each corridor profile also included an inventory of County planning activities and infrastructure investment for the area. The economic and demographic criteria used to evaluate each corridor included the following performance indicators: median family income, population, employment, sales tax revenue, building permits, retail building vacancy rates. The primary application of the commercial corridor profiles will be to identify areas that are in need of County resources to assist revitalization. Individual strategies can then be developed and implemented to address the unique needs of each prioritized corridor.

Mobility Strategies Study for County Corridors

Produced by Sacramento County Department of Transportation

This study was conducted to identify and evaluate the best strategies for relieving congestion in eleven of the County's most critical corridors. The study considers all modes of transportation - including pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and automobile - and addresses both technological improvements and physical enhancements. In the course of accomplishing the project's goal of enhanced mobility, the study recognizes several objectives, including identifying cost-effective strategies for improvements, minimizing environmental and human impacts from these improvements, managing congestion, and

identifying strategies to enhance non-auto travel. The study provides a comprehensive list of ideas and quantitatively evaluates the most promising strategies without selecting any single strategy for implementation. The results of the study are a short-list of strategies for each corridor that can be pursued as funding, partnering, and development opportunities arise.

SHRA Programs

SHRA is working in a number of unincorporated areas to increase private development, to encourage redevelopment of underutilized or deteriorating structures, and to foster community revitalization. SHRA oversees a number of redevelopment areas within the County, including Mather AFB, McClellan AFB/Watt Avenue and Walnut Grove. In addition, joint City/County redevelopment areas include Auburn Boulevard, Franklin Boulevard, and Stockton Boulevard. SHRA is also working with the County to implement a Quality Neighborhood Program in the Lerwick Road, South White Rock, and Morningstar Drive/Lemon Hill neighborhoods. Furthermore, the Florin/Perkins Enterprise Zone was established to provide tax credits, deductions and other valuable state and local incentives for business attraction, expansion and retention.

Suggested Criteria: The following criteria are suggested as a means to compare the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate corridor and to facilitate prioritization, ultimately leading to the selection of a single corridor for the first commercial corridor planning project.

Opportunities

- ◆ Vacant and underutilized land:
 - Total acreage of vacant and underutilized land.
 - Excess commercial/industrial land that may be rezoned to residential uses.
- ◆ Redevelopment opportunities:
 - Existing structures or infrastructure that may be reused or revitalized.
- ◆ Need and/or potential for future mobility improvements, including:
 - Bus Rapid Transit.
 - Light rail extension.
 - Pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
 - Roadway improvements.
- ◆ Other existing public investments:
 - Redevelopment areas, enterprise zones, and related districts.
 - Grant money currently being leveraged.
 - Transit or road improvements in progress or recently completed.
 - Related planning efforts in progress or recently completed that are complementary, but not duplicative.
- ◆ Private investment interest:
 - Property Based Improvement Districts.
 - Community groups and boards.
 - Strength of local commercial / housing / land market.
- ◆ Relation to housing project and willingness of property owners to rezone land.

- ◆ Opportunities to provide more compact housing.
- ◆ Relation to other catalyst projects in the area (e.g., Freedom Park Drive).
- ◆ Ability to address law enforcement/code enforcement complaints.
- ◆ Rate of lost opportunity (the amount/value of opportunity that will be lost if action is not taken immediately).
- ◆ Long term return on investment to unincorporated county.
- ◆ Ability to attract regional commercial opportunities.
- ◆ Ability to retain or grow existing retail tax base.
- ◆ Brownfield sites and associated funding dedicated to their redevelopment.

Constraints

- ◆ Infrastructure deficiencies:
 - Old infrastructure that currently needs to be replaced.
 - Inadequate infrastructure that is acceptable for present level of build-out but cannot accommodate new growth.
 - Inadequate resources (e.g., water) that cannot necessarily be remedied by infrastructure improvements.
- ◆ Brownfield sites and associated problems with their rehabilitation and reuse.
- ◆ Political ability to achieve tangible results.
- ◆ Ability to be a successful pilot/example project:
 - Likelihood that the process can be duplicated in other corridors.
 - Relevance of issues in the subject corridor to other corridors in the County.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED:

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