

REPORT TO SHASTA COUNTY RTPA

SUBJECT	MEETING DATE	ITEM NUMBER
Blueprint Study Grant	7/25/06	6

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Agency authorize the Executive Officer to apply for a State Blueprint Planning Grant.

SUMMARY

A State Blueprint Planning Grant is available to the RTPA. State and federal agencies encourage Blueprint studies to better guide transportation investment decisions through enhanced agency and public collaboration. Blueprint studies are not yet mandated, but increasingly are a prerequisite of receiving state and federal transportation funds. It is recommended that the Agency pursue the grant.

DISCUSSION

Blueprint studies are encouraged by state and federal transportation agencies. We have prepared the attached "Blueprint Fact Sheet" to explain study goals and benefits as they relate to our region. The Caltrans "Regional Blueprint Planning Program" web page is also attached.

Blueprint studies are aimed at reducing congestion and improving the economy consistent with community needs. With the aid of computer models, quantifiable performance indicators for traffic congestion, public investment needs, and the economy are compared under different growth scenarios. The state and federal goals are ambitious; however, it is recognized that the Blueprint grants are a first step, not an end-all to our growth challenges.

Blueprint studies are increasingly becoming a condition for RTPAs to receive state and federal transportation funds. For example, the Governor's Strategic Growth Plan Bond package on the November ballot contains significant funding grants weighted to, or only available to, projects consistent with Blueprint studies. Guidelines for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) - the RTPA's only source of discretionary transportation road improvement funds - are also being revised to promote consistency with Blueprint studies. The state's Blueprint grant represents an excellent opportunity to fund this effort now, rather than later with our general planning funds.

Blueprint grant applications are due in October and will be awarded in December. It is expected that \$250,000 will be available to the RTPA in the first year with comparable amounts available in subsequent annual cycles. The funds are good for two years; work covered in the first grant must be completed by December 2008.

Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration are sponsoring a Blueprint workshop in Chico on August 9 (see attached cover letter and flyer). All RTPA agency members and alternates have been invited.

Caltrans also sponsored a three-part Blueprint Learning Network for which all Agency members were invited. Agency member Goekler attended the first meeting in Sacramento. Agency member Mathena will also attend the final two sessions. Any other Agency members are welcome to participate.

It is recommended that the Agency direct staff to prepare a State Blueprint Planning Grant application. If successful, a final work plan will be presented to the Agency for approval.

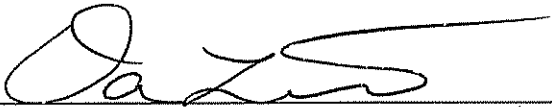
OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

A Blueprint Training workshop in Sacramento was attended by RTPA Agency member, Dean Goekler; Caltrans District 2 Director, Brian Crane; Redding Development Services Director, Jim Hamilton; Tehama County RTPA Executive Officer, Gary Antone; and Shasta RTPA Executive Officer, Dan Little.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has reviewed this item and supports the recommendation.

FINANCING

If approved, grant funds would need to be placed in the RTPA's Overall Work Program (OWP). Like other federal planning funds, a 20% match is required which can consist of in-kind services such as local agency and RTPA staff time (reimbursed by state planning funds). City and county staff time may also be reimbursed by the RTPA.



Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Officer

DSL/jac

Attachments: Blueprint Fact Sheet
 Regional Blueprint Planning Letter and Workshop Flyer
 Caltrans' Blueprint Web Page



WHY STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS ARE ENCOURAGING BLUEPRINTS

With state and federal transportation funds becoming scarcer, it is clear that regions cannot buy their way out of congestion by simply adding roads and transit. Through more efficient regional coordination of transportation, land use, and economic development – and enhanced public participation – limited transportation dollars can be stretched further to reduce congestion and improve quality of life.

BLUEPRINT STUDY DEFINED

Blueprint studies examine planned growth over 20 to 30 years from a broad regional perspective based on public and agency interaction. With the help of computer models, different growth scenarios with varying urban densities are compared using performance indicators such as traffic congestion, public investment costs, and economic benefit. Information derived from the Blueprint study will assist local jurisdictions in making sound investment decisions consistent with community priorities.

WHAT A BLUEPRINT STUDY CAN DO FOR OUR REGION

Blueprint information must be meaningful and useful to both local agencies and the public. Information will be developed for the entire region. It will be presented in a common format to better compare factors related to traffic, growth, housing, economic development, capital improvement needs, land use, and environmental constraints. This information will be mapped for us in geographic information systems (GIS).

Such information can support local efforts including general and specific plans, redevelopment plans, capital improvement programs, traffic studies, the regional traffic model, environmental impact reports, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), RTPA project selection, and public involvement efforts.

WHAT A BLUEPRINT STUDY IS AND IS NOT

Is not: A mandatory plan to be adopted by cities and counties that pre-empts local decision-making authority

Is: A cooperative effort to gather information and develop decision-making tools for use by local agencies

Is not: Design-based standards to create community identities or "livable communities"

Is: Outcome- and performance-based strategies for a high return on public investments

Is not: A wholesale change in the way we approach community development

Is: An identification of the smallest changes to the status quo of development patterns that can reap the highest community benefit

Is not: A cure-all for our regional challenges

Is: A step in the direction of improved regional coordination

PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Inherent in a good Blueprint study is broad, responsive public and agency involvement. An open dialogue regarding regional growth challenges and needs will be facilitated. The full spectrum of involvement methods will be used (work groups, meetings, polling) to determine the most engaging techniques and establish a framework for ongoing communication.

FUNDING AND GRANTS

The Shasta County RTPA is one of four (out of seventeen) California MPOs that did not receive a grant in 2005. \$1,000,000 is earmarked in next years budget for these four MPOs. We could reasonably expect a \$250,000 grant for our region. It is expected that more funds will be available in subsequent annual cycles to complete additional phases of study as needed.

STUDY AREA

The study will focus on the South Central Urban Region (SCUR) of Shasta County and, more specifically, areas that have community sewer and water service. It is envisioned that the study will also consider Northern Tehama County since transportation and land use patterns in this area are so intertwined with our own.

CONSEQUENCES OF NOT DOING THE BLUEPRINT STUDY

California's largest regions have already completed their Blueprint studies. They are proposing that most state and federal transportation funding should be contingent on consistency with an approved Blueprint study. The state is currently developing guidelines to this effect for major funding programs used by our region. Programs where our region could lose funding include: the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the Governor's Transportation Bond (on the November 2006 ballot). The state is also considering linking housing and community development funds to Blueprint studies, and relaxing environmental requirements for projects consistent with Blueprint studies.

Not securing the grant means a lost opportunity to fund public involvement, regional coordination, and information collection efforts that would be of benefit for our region.

For More Information

Visit Caltrans' Blueprint website:

http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/orip/Collaborative_Planning.htm

Shasta County RTPA Contact:

Dan Little, AICP, Executive Officer
1855 Placer Street
Redding, CA 96001
Ph: 530-245-6819
Fax: 530-225-5667
Email: dlittle@co.shasta.ca.us



Shasta County

**Regional Transportation
Planning Agency**

1855 Placer Street • Redding, CA 96001 • (530)225-5661 • FAX (530)225-5667
E-Mail shasroad@snowcrest.net • HOME PAGE www.scrtpa.org

Daniel S. Little, Executive Officer

June 16, 2006

RSP 020023

Subject: Regional Blueprint Planning

You are encouraged to participate in a unique opportunity for the region and attend a free Blueprint Planning Workshop in Chico on August 9, 2006.

The Shasta County Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) hopes to start a Regional Blueprint Plan this fall with the help of a state grant. Increasingly, these plans are required by state and federal transportation agencies as a condition of project funding. Blueprint plans are intended to better guide transportation investments through broadened public and agency involvement with elevated consideration of land use and economic issues.

You have been identified as a key civic leader to guide this effort. The state recognizes that growth challenges in Shasta County are vastly different from those in Los Angeles. This grant provides flexibility to tailor the study to our needs. The RTPA's overriding goal is to generate meaningful and useful information with these grant resources. To that end, we need your help to identify key growth issues. This summer we plan to map out a study process that best identifies and addresses our community's vision. Going forward, I hope you will find it worthwhile to remain active in the study process.

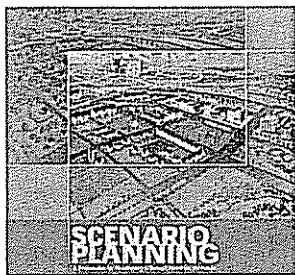
The workshop described in the enclosed flyer is an important first step in understanding the Blueprint Planning Program. Other regions will share their experiences and, hopefully, get us thinking about what a Blueprint process can and cannot do, and how it can help local agencies invest and grow. The workshop is customized to the three far-northern regions in California that are eligible for the grant: Shasta County, Butte County, and the Tahoe Basin.

Space is limited, so RSVP to the contact shown on the flyer soon. Lunch is on FHWA and Caltrans! Please call me at (530) 245-6819 if you have any questions or suggestions. I hope to see you there.

Very truly yours,

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Officer
Shasta County Regional Transportation
Planning Agency (MPO)

Enclosure



This is an opportunity to learn more about California's...



Regional Blueprint Planning Program

When

Wednesday
August 9, 2006
8:30am-3:30pm

Where

Holiday Inn
685 Manzanita Court
Chico, CA 95926

Cost

Workshop and lunch are free of charge provided by FHWA and Caltrans (Participants are responsible for their own travel and lodging).

Hotel Room

Government rates available:
RSVP by July 21
Call: (530) 345-2491

Information

Nieves Castro
(916) 653-4097
Barbara Kiehn
(916) 419-7220

This is an opportunity to learn more about California's Regional Blueprint Planning Program and grant funding availability.

Attend a dynamic one-day Scenario Planning roundtable discussion focused on the Northern California region and meet peer agencies from around the country as well as experts from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the University of California, Davis.

Join your peers from Merced County Association of Governments and Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, Charlottesville, Virginia, MPOs selected based on demographic, environmental and economic similarities to the region.

- Learn how scenario planning can assist your region with California's Regional Blueprint Planning emphasis.
- See how combining state-of-the-art technology with public involvement can prepare the region for growth challenges.
- Improve the quality of life and economic vitality in Northern California through stakeholder collaboration on establishing a regional vision.
- Tap into technical support from FHWA for meeting SAFETEA-LU requirements through scenario planning.

The workshop will be co-hosted by the Federal Highway Administration Scenario Planning Office, Washington, DC; the United States Department of Transportation Volpe Center, Cambridge, MA; and the California Department of Transportation.

RSVP by August 1, 2006

Just send an email with your name, title, organization and phone number to:

Bkiehn@aol.com



Sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, and the California Department of Transportation

Welcome to *California*

Regional Blueprint Planning Program

California Regional Blueprint Planning Program

The Regional Blueprint Planning Program is intended to better inform regional and local decision-making, through pro-active engagement of all segments of the population as well as critical stakeholders in the community, business interests, academia, builders, environmental advocates, and to foster consensus on a vision and preferred land use pattern. It is anticipated that the regional blueprint planning grants will build capacity for regional collaboration and integrated planning that will in turn enable regions to plan to accommodate all their future growth, thereby reducing need for sprawl.

The grants for regional collaborative decision-making will lead to adoption of blueprint plans that will:

1. Foster a more efficient land use pattern that (a) supports improved mobility and reduced dependency on single-occupant vehicle trips, (b) accommodates an adequate supply of housing for all incomes, (c) reduces impacts on valuable habitat, productive farmland, and air quality, (d) increases resource use efficiency, and (e) results in safe and vibrant neighborhoods.
2. Provide consumers more housing and transportation choices.
3. Improve California's economic competitiveness and quality of life.
4. Reduce costs and time needed to deliver transportation projects through informed early public and resource agency involvement.
5. Secure local government and community support, including that of under-represented groups, to achieve the resulting comprehensive vision through including innovative computer models and public involvement activities.
6. Establish a process for public and stakeholder engagement that can be replicated to build awareness of and support for critical infrastructure and housing needs.

The regional blueprint efforts will include development of regional performance measures that can measure progress toward the region's own vision for future land use and transportation. Each region will also select several statewide performance measures to measure progress toward statewide transportation system and housing goals.

BLUEPRINT CONTACTS:

Sharon Scherzinger, Acting Chief, Division of Transportation Planning

(916) 653-3362

Garth Hopkins, Acting Chief, Office of Regional and Interagency Planning

(916) 654-8175

Katie Benouar, Regional Blueprint Project Manager

(916) 653-3758

Judy Semerjian, Regional Blueprint Planner

(916) 651-6010

REGIONAL BLUEPRINT PLANNING PROGRAM GRANTS PROGRESS REPORTING

Information for MPOs and Caltrans Districts:

Blueprint Criteria Performance Measures

Blueprint Monitoring/Reporting Process

Blueprint Progress Report

BP & Districts Contacts

Collaborative Planning

Collaborative planning is multi-agency, inter-jurisdictional planning that integrates land use and infrastructure planning to meet the community's needs while addressing economic development, environmental protection and equity. Collaborative planning includes community involvement to ensure that development meets the vision and needs of the residents of the region. It involves early involvement of stakeholders and sharing of data. New graphic techniques for displaying the results of land use decisions enhance community involvement and integrated planning.

Background

Full consideration of environmental preservation is needed earlier in the planning process to preserve habitat while developing infrastructure and reconciling competing land uses. In both urban and rural California, the need for economic development, affordable housing, equitable distribution of jobs and housing and other infrastructure is great. Development pressure on communities, the green infrastructure and the existing transportation system is unrelenting. Decisions on land use and infrastructure investment are made by a myriad of agencies at the federal, state and local levels. Planning cycles differ making it difficult to coordinate plans and share planning data. It is critical to address the needs in a balanced and integrated way and to establish a framework that will institutionalize an integrated and collaborative planning process.

For Caltrans, the immediate goal of collaborative planning is to expedite transportation project delivery by streamlining the environmental review and permitting process. This requires new methods and processes that will bring the resources agencies into the transportation planning process much earlier than the NEPA process does in the current project delivery process. This involves developing new partnerships and ways of doing business. Corridor-level environmental studies, combining transportation planning with habitat and conservation planning, corridor-wide programmatic mitigation agreements and improved environmental consideration in the long-range regional transportation plans may all be parts of the solutions. Influencing local land use planning and regional jobs/housing balance is also within the scope of the collaborative planning effort.

Blueprint Grants Historical Information

- MPO Regional Blueprint Program information and Grant Applications. This program is a complement to the Governor's "GoCalifornia" initiative to significantly improve California's transportation system.
[Secretary's Blueprint Letter](#) and [Grant Application Package](#) - Deadline - September 30, 2005
[Blueprint Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)
- MPO Regional Program Workshop - August 2, 2005 - Materials
 - [Final Agenda](#)
 - [Speakers](#)
 - [SANDAG Regional Comprehensive Plan](#)
 - [Lessons from the IRP Program](#)
 - [Blueprint Implementation Strategies](#)
 - [Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process](#)
 - [Regional Blueprint Planning Program Grants Timetable](#)
 - [U-PLAN Land Use Forecase Model](#)
 - [SACOG Performance Measures](#)
 - [HCD Performance Measures for Housing](#)
 - [SACOG Tools for Blueprint Planning](#)

The Inland Central California Collaborative Planning Assessment Project

One of the most valuable preliminary steps in a collaborative planning process is to undertake a capacity assessment. Among other things, an initial collaborative planning capacity assessment can identify the key parties of interest and their level of receptivity to the project and potential outcomes, determine the key issues and how they are perceived by and overlap among the stakeholders, outline the political and social dynamics among stakeholders, identify resources within the planning area that can be used or augmented

in support of the collaborative planning process, analyze potential collaborative approaches and determine their likelihood for success, and provide guidance on how to best frame the initial stakeholder meetings.

[Collaborative Planning Graphic](#)

Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP) Merced County Association of Governments Pilot Project

The Merced Partnership for Integrated Planning (PIP) project was the result of a 1999 partnership agreement (known as the Mare Island Accord) between the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The agreement set out to provide a framework to improve interagency communications, the quality and timeliness of planning data and to address environmental issues early in the transportation planning process to avoid major delays during project delivery. For hard copies of the report, please contact Dara Wheeler at dara.wheeler@dot.ca.gov or (916) 653-2355.

[Merced PIP Final Report](#)

Product Links

[Assessment Study](#)

[UPlan Sample](#)

[Flow Chart](#)

[Partnership for Integrated Planning \(PIP\): Merced Pilot Cumulative Impacts Advisory Panel 2002-2004 Report](#)

Links to Other Websites

[Information Center for the Environment at University of California at Davis](#): developer of the UPlan growth scenario planning model for small urban and rural regions.

[The Great Valley Center of Modesto](#): collaborative planning partner.

[Merced County Associations of Governments \(MCAG\) Partnership for Integrated Planning](#): a successful application of collaborative planning in development the long-range regional transportation plan. The project was initiated by the Mare Island Accord Group made up of the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and California Department of Transportation. The Group chose Merced County to pilot the integrated planning concept. Innovative public outreach and use of the UPlan growth scenario planning model led to more community involvement in the transportation planning process. Involvement of federal and state natural resources protection agencies in the early planning and data gathering stages improved the analysis in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Please read the RTP and EIR documents on the MCAG website as well as information on the community involvement process. [Publications](#)