

STAFF REPORT



MEETING DATE:	10/14/14
SUBJECT:	Authorize Applications for FY 2015/16 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
AGENDA ITEM:	5-9
STAFF CONTACT:	Keith Williams, Assistant Transportation Planner

SUMMARY:

Caltrans is soliciting proposals for the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program. Two grants are offered under the program: Strategic Partnerships and Sustainable Communities. Two projects have been identified for potential funding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the board of directors authorize a Sustainable Communities Planning grant application in the amount of \$225,000, and a Strategic Partnerships Planning grant application in the amount of \$125,000.

DISCUSSION:

The Caltrans annual Consolidated Transportation Planning Grant Program has been renamed the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program for the FY 2015/16 grant cycle. It has been trimmed from five sub-programs down to two: Strategic Partnerships grants (\$1.5 million available statewide) and Sustainable Communities grants (\$8.3 million available statewide). Grants should lead to the programming and implementation of transportation projects that increase mobility, safety, jobs, affordable housing, sustainability, and public participation.

It is proposed that the following grant applications be prepared and submitted:

- **'GoShasta' Active Transportation Plan (\$225,000)** – An up-to-date active transportation plan is needed to ensure that local bicycle and pedestrian projects are eligible to compete for future ATP grant cycles. In May 2014, the board of directors authorized staff to prepare and submit an Active Transportation Program (ATP) grant application for the development of a regional active transportation plan. Although not selected for funding, this application could be retooled and submitted under the Sustainable Communities Grant program.
- **Consolidated Goods & Freight Hub Study (\$125,000)** – A priority initiative of the Superior California Economic Development District (SCEDD) and Growing Local (a coalition of agriculture-related stakeholders representing the counties of Shasta, Tehama, Trinity, Humboldt, Del Norte, Lassen, Modoc and Siskiyou) is the development of a regional

hub for the aggregation, wholesale, and distribution of agricultural goods. The need for such a facility – one that also includes forest products and other natural resource-based industries – was identified in SRTA's recently completed North State Transportation for Economic Development Study. The proposed project would study the feasibility of a multi-industry hub located in Shasta County and evaluate the practical benefits related to transportation efficiency, economic development, and greenhouse gas emission reductions. A one-page project description and justification is provided by attachment.

SCEDD and Growing Local propose to prepare the grant application, but need SRTA to serve as the eligible applicant and, if awarded, provide grant contract administration.

ALTERNATIVES:

The board of directors may direct staff to submit either application, or none at all.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Local agencies were part of the original ATP Active Transportation Plan grant application and scope of work development. Local agencies have been consulted and support the proposed new grant application. With regard to proposed Strategic Partnerships grant, Caltrans District 2 has been consulted and will participate in the project. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) concurs with the staff recommendation.

FINANCING:

Funding in the amount of \$58,081 is budgeted in the FY 2014/15 Overall Work Program (Work Element 703.01 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning) for SRTA and local agency support of an active transportation plan grant. This would satisfy the 11.47% local match requirement for the Sustainable Communities grant.

The Strategic Partnership grant requires a 20% local match that may be satisfied with any combination of cash and in-kind participation. This requirement would be met with contributions from SCEDD and Growing Local.



Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

Attachments: Superior California Economic Development District 'About Us' website page
Growing Local 'About Us' website page
Project Summary: Consolidated Goods & Freight Hub Study



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Source: <http://www.scedd.org/about.htm>



LOCAL HEALTHY FOOD FOR ALL

Growing Local

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About Us

Growing Local is a coalition of local farmers, ranchers, health officials, educators, non-profits, urban gardeners and consumers collaborating to increase the consumption of healthy, local foods and to create sustainable, affordable, healthy food systems in the Shasta-Cascade Region.

Our Vision

A healthy, sustainable, accessible local food system from seed to table and back to soil.

Our Mission

To support and promote sustainable, local food systems in order to provide healthy, fresh, safe food to all in the North State communities.

Shasta Farms to You is a project of the University of California, Davis, the University of California Cooperative Extension and the Growing Local Coalition.

Our Strategic Goals

- Increase access to healthy local foods and thereby improve the eating habits and overall health of northern California children, their parents and other residents.
- Grow market opportunities and contribute significantly to the economic health of local foods producers in northern California and the communities in which they live.
- Enhance the statewide and nationwide awareness of northern California as a physically and economically healthy environment and an inviting place to live.

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FY 2015/16 Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

Strategic Partnerships Planning Grant

Draft Proposal: “Consolidated Goods & Freight Hub Study”

Project Description

Public, private, non-profit, and educational stakeholders will identify and analyze barriers and opportunities to the aggregation, wholesale, and distribution of agriculture products in the counties of Shasta, Tehama, Trinity, Humboldt, Del Norte, Lassen, Modoc and Siskiyou. The objective is to reduce ‘food miles traveled’ and greenhouse gas emissions generated by >\$1 billion in annual agricultural transactions within the region.

In light of funding shortfalls for capacity increasing projects and maintenance, this project seeks to optimize throughput on existing transportation facilities and leverage private sector resources. Data collection and travel demand modeling will quantify the impact of a regional hub on transportation system performance. Results will feed business models and investment strategies.

Project Justification

The eight-county study area covers 30,569 square miles and is home to a rich variety of working landscapes. A limited number of interregional transportation corridors serve as collectors of agricultural and natural resource-based products on the way to processing, storage, and market delivery. Urban nodes located at the crossroads of such corridors are well-suited to consolidated commodity transport.

Unfortunately, the movement of \$953 million per year in regional food production, as well as the import of \$102 million in feed, \$17 million in seeds, and various other farm production inputs, is largely uncoordinated. The region’s 6,399 farms transport food and receive farm inputs almost entirely by truck, ranging in size from multi-trailer semis to delivery vans. Partial loads, deadheading, and other inefficient practices generate interregional travel demand and greenhouse gas emissions while adding little if any economic value to the region.

The need for a centralized, intermodal hub for agriculture – and potentially other natural resource-based industries – was called out in the recently completed ‘North State Transportation for Economic Development Study’. However, additional funding is required for technical tasks (e.g. fill data gaps and perform travel demand modeling) and to continue coordination with key partners (e.g. producers and distributors).

A less-known issue is the effective capping of agriculture industry development as a result of transportation system shortfalls. Producers located in some of the North State’s most productive agricultural areas are harvesting large quantities of high quality food products but cannot effectively market them because there is no economical way to transport products to market. For the same reason, large tracts of prime agriculture land are lying fallow. This study will quantify the extent of this disconnect in dollars and jobs, and explore opportunities – such as consolidated transport, backhauling, and industry clustering – to capitalize on this unrealized potential.

If selected for funding, this study will be used by transportation planners, economic development specialists, and regional food chain participants to:

- Make better use of existing transportation system capacity;
- Foster economic clusters of agriculture producers and transporters;
- Facilitate a more robust regional food value chain that addresses financial, social, and environmental goals; and
- Reduce ‘food miles traveled’ and associated greenhouse gas emissions.