STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE:	**December 8, 2015**
SUBJECT:	**Correspondence – Information Only**
AGENDA ITEM:	**5-5**
STAFF CONTACT:	**Janie Coffman, Executive Assistant**

Attached is correspondence determined to be of interest to the board of directors:

- October 29, 2015, letter from SRTA to California Strategic Growth Council regarding the Draft 2015/16 AHSC program guidelines & options for MPO engagement and input
- November 13, 2015, letter and Resolution from California Air Resources Board to SRTA accepting the determination by SRTA Board of Directors regarding the Sustainable Communities Strategy
- November 19, 2015, letter from SRTA to the California Energy Commission (via ChargePoint) regarding grant funding for Upstate Region Plug-in Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director

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Daniel S. Little, Executive Director

October 29, 2015

Mr. Randall Winston, Executive Director
California Strategic Growth Council

Subject: Comments on Draft 2015/16 AHSC Program Guidelines & Options for MPO Engagement and Input

Randall
Mr. ~~Winston~~:

Thank you for the Strategic Growth Council's (SGC) continuing and genuine efforts to engage and involve regional agencies as partners in the Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Program. In particular, we appreciate the time taken to visit Redding and discuss preparations for the upcoming grant cycle. Working together, we are confident that the program will effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions while creating more livable, healthy, and prosperous communities.

This letter is to provide feedback on the Draft 2015/16 AHSC Program Guidelines as well as 'Table 2: Possible Options for MPO Engagement and Input' provided in your September 17, 2015, memorandum.

Comments Regarding Draft 2015/16 AHSC Program Guidelines:
We commend the SGC for seeking to broaden the geographic distribution of funds. And while we like the sound of the Rural Innovation Project Area (RIPA), we find that the 'innovation' part could be bolstered beyond minimum net density requirements. What we hope to achieve in the Shasta region – and hope to see throughout California's small- and medium-sized metropolitan areas – are game-changer projects that leap-frog beyond the status quo and serve as catalysts for the next generation of development.

With this in mind, we offer the following set of suggestions intended to be implemented together as a package:

- Expand the definition of rural in the RIPA to be consistent with federal standards distinguishing small and medium MPOs (<200,000 population) from major metropolitan areas (>200,000 population), as is used in the Active Transportation Program (ATP) and other programs;
- Since the number of areas eligible to complete under RIPA will increase under this expanded definition, the RIPA funding target should be increased from 10% to at least 30%; and
- Add a new innovation category and criteria points for the 'game-changer value' and 'catalyst potential' of the project.

By 'game-changer value', we mean big-ticket projects that transform a community, versus those that are incremental in nature and likely to occur with or without AHSC Program funds. To gauge this value, it should be possible to measure a proposed project's relative density, floor-area ratio, mobility-enhancing amenities, and green design features *in comparison to what is currently found in the larger community or region in which the project resides*. And by 'catalyst potential', we mean the presence of vacant and underutilized parcels in the surrounding area, alignment with local and regional transportation investments, and a markedly higher growth rate for the project area in the adopted Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. SRTA would be happy to work with the SGC and other MPOs to flesh out the specific evaluation criteria and methodology.

During the FY 2014/15 AHSC Program grant cycle, only two rural projects were selected for funding. Additional funds should be directed to small- and medium-sized MPOs regions; however, these need not be token projects for the sake of regional funding parity. Changes to the RIPA as described above, combined with suggestions for enhanced MPO engagement described below, will enable small- and medium-sized MPOs to play a more substantial and meaningful role in achieving statewide goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas emission.

Comments Regarding Options for MPO Engagement and Input:
The following comments correspond to the four categories described in the SGC's September 17, 2015, memorandum:

- <u>Regional/Local Capacity Building</u> – The type and quality of projects needed to meet AHSC program goals can take years to prepare for capital grants. Identifying candidate projects and shaping the scope of transportation and land use components are within the wheelhouse of regional agencies to accomplish. We are presently developing a pipeline of competitive projects for future grant cycles and will continue to play this role moving forward.

  SRTA and local developers are hampered, however, by a lack of knowledge and experience in assembling gap financing (i.e. the various financing tools and incentives such as tax credit financing, bonds, impact fee deferment, housing funds, and so forth) required for a large development project to pencil-out financially – even with AHSC Program funds. Capacity building in the form of technical training for the region's development and real estate financing professionals would help bridge the gap between a great idea and a grant-ready project. SRTA would be happy to coordinate with the local builders' exchange, lenders, and other partners if the SGC is able to coordinate with Housing and Community Development (HCD) and/or other experts to organize a technical assistance workshop in Shasta County.

- <u>Outreach and Information Sharing</u> – While the SGC's extensive outreach efforts have elevated AHSC program awareness, we have found that qualified and motivated applicants are intimidated by the complex program guidelines once they dig into them. Regional agencies are adept in translating complex programs and policies into familiar terms and extracting germane details for decision makers, regional partners, and the general public. Even so, given the wide range and combination of eligible activities, we believe that project-specific consultation with the SGC during the initial scoping of grant applications is essential.

SRTA recently organized a technical assistance teleconference between the SGC and a private sector developer, project design consultants, and the local jurisdiction. Project-specific feedback provided by the SGC is being used to package the project for the next round of AHSC Program grants. As future candidate projects come forth and are fleshed out, SRTA will continue to engage the SGC in this fashion to further along the most promising projects.

- Application Development and Assistance – SRTA staff are skilled at conceptualizing and composing meaningful grant applications. Whether leading or supporting a project proposal, SRTA takes great care to align projects with regional plans and programs to ensure successful implementation and long-term return on investment. SRTA often finds itself in the role of matchmaker, marshaling various organizations, resources, and other components to form a well-rounded proposal and full complement of vested partners.

  Your visit to preview the region's upcoming proposal helped sharpen the project scope and galvanize the public-private partnership. In the future, as other high-profile projects progress toward grant readiness, we will invite the SGC and applicable SGC partners to engage with the community in a similar manner.

- Application Review and Recommendations – In a smaller MPO region such as Shasta, project proposals are most likely to have been developed in close consultation and communication with SRTA. Furthermore, the number of proposals submitted from our region in any given cycle is likely to be small (i.e. 1 to 3 proposals). As such, reviewing and ranking proposals from the region may not be necessary.

  Of greater concern to SRTA is the fair and equitable evaluation of proposals between regions. More specifically, we are concerned that funds targeted for small- and medium-sized MPO regions are shrinking under the proposed RIPA. Revisions to the Draft 2015/16 AHSC Program Guidelines recommended at the beginning of this letter would help alleviate these concerns.

Again, thank you for involving MPOs in the implementation AHSC Program. We look forward to ongoing discussion and coordination.

Sincerely,

FOR Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director
Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (MPO)

DTW/jac

November 13, 2015

Mr. Daniel S. Little
Executive Director
Shasta Regional Transportation Agency
1255 East Street, Suite 202
Redding, California 96001

Dear Mr. Little:

Congratulations on the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency's (SRTA) adoption of the region's first Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). The Air Resources Board (ARB) recognizes that this SCS represents many years of effort. We appreciate SRTA's work to advance the sustainability of transportation and land use planning in Shasta County.

In accordance with the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, please find the enclosed Board Resolution Number 15-45. This Board Resolution accepts the determination by SRTA that its 2015 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy would, if implemented, meet the 2020 and 2035 regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets established by ARB.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Ms. Jennifer Gray, Air Pollution Specialist, at (916) 327-0027, or by email at jennifer.gray@arb.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Corey
Executive Officer

Enclosure

cc: See next page.

cc: The Honorable Missy McArthur, Chair
Shasta Regional Transportation Agency
1255 East Street, Suite 202
Redding, California 96001

Ms. Karen Magliano, Chief
Air Quality Planning and Science Division

Ms. Jennifer Gray
Air Pollution Specialist
Air Quality Planning and Science Division

State of California
AIR RESOURCES BOARD

ACCEPTANCE OF THE GREENHOUSE GAS QUANTIFICATION DETERMINATION FOR SHASTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AGENCY'S REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

Resolution 15-45

October 22, 2015

Agenda Item No.: 15-8-1

WHEREAS, SB 375 (Steinberg, Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008), also known as the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, aims to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from passenger vehicle travel through improved transportation and land use planning at the regional scale;

WHEREAS, SB 375 requires each of the State's 18 federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), including the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA), to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), or an Alternative Planning Strategy that meets the regional GHG emissions reduction targets for passenger vehicles set by the Air Resources Board (ARB or Board);

WHEREAS, on September 23, 2010, the Board set GHG emissions reduction targets for 2020 and 2035, expressed as a per capita percentage reduction relative to 2005 levels, for each of the State's MPOs;

WHEREAS, the targets set for the SRTA region are a zero (0) percent decrease in 2020 and in 2035 relative to 2005 levels;

WHEREAS, SRTA staff engaged the public by providing presentations, updates, and holding public hearings between February 2014 and June 2015;

WHEREAS, in March 2015, SRTA published a draft Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) for 2015-2035 which was available for public review for 61 days;

WHEREAS, on June 30, 2015, the SRTA Board of Directors approved the final RTP/SCS for 2015-2035 and SRTA Board Resolution 15-10 determined that the SCS, if implemented, would meet the targets set by ARB;

WHEREAS, as required by California Government Code section 65080(b)(2)(J)(ii), SRTA submitted the final SCS to ARB on September 16, 2015, for review of its GHG emissions quantification determination;

WHEREAS, California Government Code section 65080(b)(2)(J)(ii) calls for ARB to accept or reject an MPO's determination that its approved SCS would, if implemented, achieve the GHG emissions reduction targets established by the Board;

WHEREAS, ARB staff performed a technical evaluation of the approved 2015 SCS using ARB's methodology, published in July 2011, for review of GHG emissions quantification procedures for an SCS;

WHEREAS, ARB staff's evaluation found that SRTA used technical methodologies that would reasonably quantify GHG emissions reductions from the approved SCS;

WHEREAS, ARB staff's technical evaluation of SRTA's GHG emissions reduction quantification is contained in Attachment A, "Technical Evaluation of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Quantification for the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency's SB 375 Sustainable Communities Strategy," dated October 2015; and

WHEREAS, ARB staff's evaluation affirms that SRTA's approved 2015-2035 SCS would, if implemented, achieve the GHG emissions reduction targets set by the Board for the region for 2020 and 2035.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that under California Government Code section 65080(b)(2)(J)(ii), the Board accepts SRTA's quantification of the GHG emissions reductions from the final SCS approved by the SRTA Board of Directors on June 30, 2015 and accepts the MPO's determination that the SCS would, if implemented, achieve the region's GHG emissions reduction targets.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that ARB staff forward this resolution to the SRTA Board of Directors and Executive Director.

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of Resolution 15-45 as adopted by the Air Resources Board.

Tracy Jensen

Tracy Jensen, Clerk of the Board

Resolution 15-45

October 22, 2015

Identification of Attachments to the Board Resolution

Attachment A: Technical Evaluation of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Quantification for the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency's SB 375 Sustainable Communities Strategy, released October 2015.

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Daniel S. Little, Executive Director

November 19, 2015

Robert B. Weisenmiller, Ph.D.
Chair, California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

Subject: CEC GFO 15-601 DC Fast Chargers North-South Corridor

Dear Mr. Weisenmiller:

The Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) is pleased to support ChargePoint's application to the California Energy Commission (CEC) Grant Funding Opportunity (GFO) 15-601 entitled *California Express Corridor*. This project will implement the *Upstate Region Plug-in Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan* through the deployment of Electric Vehicle (EV) DC Fast Charging stations within the Upstate Region, including three locations in Shasta County. With the CEC's funding support, this project will close gaps in the West Coast Electric Highway, help to reduce electric vehicle owner "range anxiety," and encourage the adoption of electric vehicles, thereby lowering transportation related greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, it will spur economic activity in rural and small-urban communities that have experienced very few of the benefits of public and private investment in electric vehicle technology.

This project supports the following goals and objectives of SRTA's 2015 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP):

- Develop an integrated, context-appropriate range of local and interregional transportation choices.
- Identify and minimize the direct and indirect adverse impacts of transportation on the environment.
- Facilitate sustainable economic development programs and projects.

A key component of this project is to collaborate with the Upstate Plug-in Electric Vehicle Coordinating Council (PEVCC) comprised of a diverse and inclusive group of relevant and local stakeholders. SRTA is a member of the Upstate PEVCC and follows the mission of this group to:

> *"Work together to promote and accelerate the local adoption of PEV technology as a key strategy for linking various parts of the west coast and state of California with PEV infrastructure and further develop the renewable energy resources in our region to meet our community's transportation needs."*

As part of our role with the Upstate PEVCC, SRTA will provide access to appropriate staff to help facilitate grant activities, provide input and assistance where appropriate, and assist with outreach efforts. SRTA and the PEVCC are continuing our PEV readiness planning activities through the planning grant awarded by the CEC in 2015.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (530) 262-6190 or by email at dlittle@srta.ca.gov. Thank you for your time in considering ChargePoint's DC Fast Chargers North-South Corridors grant application.

Sincerely,

Daniel S. Little, AICP, Executive Director
Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (MPO)

DSL/SMT/jac