

I-15 IRP POLICY COMMITTEE AND TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

October 15, 2004

AGENDA ITEM NO. **3**

Action Requested: APPROVE

I-15 INTERREGIONAL PARTNERSHIP POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS

Meeting of Friday, June 18, 2004

The June 18, 2004 meeting of the I-15 Interregional Partnership (IRP) Policy Committee was called to order at 1:40 p.m. at the Temecula City Hall. Because a quorum of members was not present, Interregional Partnership actions were not taken at this meeting. Approval of the draft final project report and approval of interregional strategies will be forwarded to the WRCOG and SANDAG Boards of Directors.

Policy Committee members in attendance were Co-chair Hon. Jeff Comerchero (City of Temecula), Hon. Jim Bond (County Water Authority/City of Encinitas), Hon. Thomas Buckley (City of Lake Elsinore), Hon Ed Gallo (City of Escondido), Hon. Pam Slater-Price (County of San Diego), Hon. Jack Van Haaster (City of Murrieta), Bill Figge (Caltrans District 11), and Bill Mosby (Caltrans District 8).

The following guests and I-15 IRP Technical Working Group (TWG) members were in attendance: Maurice Eaton (Caltrans District 11), Sachiko Kohatsu (Office of Supervisor Slater-Price), Katherine Marks (North County Times), Jim O'Grady (City of Temecula), Paul O'Neal (representing State Senator Bill Morrow), Mark Roberts (Caltrans District 8), and Dennis Thompson (Caltrans District 11). The following I-15 IRP staff members were in attendance: Kevin Viera and Bill Hodge (WRCOG), and Susan Baldwin, George Franck, Jeff Martin, Alejandra Romero, and Hector Vanegas (SANDAG).

1. Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chair Comerchero welcomed Policy Committee members and guests. Policy Committee members and others attending the meeting introduced themselves.

2. I-15 IRP Policy Committee Discussion and Actions – March 26, 2004

There were no comments on the draft meeting summary for the March 26, 2004 meeting.

3. Public Comments and Communications

The Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) is holding a 13th Annual General Assembly on June 24, 2004. The IRP Policy Committee and Technical Working Group members are invited to attend.

4. I-15 IRP Revised Draft Final Project Report

Staff summarized the comments made on the draft Final Report during the outreach period, using a table to indicate how these comments are reflected in a revised draft. The most

significant changes are the re-classification of strategy H1 - the provision of a full range of housing in all jurisdictions – as a combination short-range- and long-range strategy as well as the addition of two new transportation strategies:

T13 – Coordinate Caltrans/Regional Agency Transportation Planning and

T14 – Expand Interregional Commuter Service with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

In addition to comments received during the comment period, the Friends of San Diego (FOSD) submitted comments on the IRP dated and received on June 17, 2004. These comments faulted the IRP for identifying a need for housing in San Diego County beyond those units proposed in the local General Plans. FOSD believes that existing General Plans would adequately house the natural population increase in the region, and that controlling employment growth would eliminate the need for additional housing. Staff did not recommend changes to the IRP strategies based on FOSD's comments.

Supervisor Slater-Price said that the interregional commuters are looking for a more suburban setting. Higher density housing in San Diego will not meet their demand. San Diego needs to provide housing choices as well as choices for getting people to work. In the past, affordable housing has been provided through "green field" development and reduced-interest rate mortgage programs. Staff noted that SANDAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) proposes only a modest increase in overall housing density.

Chair Comerchero said that the short-range carpooling strategy should include an active outreach program to inform workers about their commute options. IRP survey information indicated that more people would be willing to participate in car pool and van pool programs. Councilmember Jim Bond mentioned that the IRP should continue to deal with commuters in the San Diego/Riverside border area.

Mr. Bond stressed the need to implement the proposed strategies; to make sure that the plan has continuity. The Co-Chair agreed, noting that the IRP members should continue communicating with each other. Mr. Bond also noted that both regions are running out of water because demand continues to grow. Water supply agencies do not have the role of controlling or managing population growth.

Co-Chair Comerchero noted that the Policy Committee members present had no objections to moving the recommended strategies and draft final report on to the SANDAG and WRCOG Boards of Directors for possible action. It was the consensus of those attending the meeting that both Boards of Directors should approve the 23 recommended strategies and the project report.

5. Status of the Caltrans Districts 8 and 11 Cooperative I-15 County Line Study

Bill Figge, CALTRANS, said that transportation strategies are a key aspect of the IRP. Coordination between the two Caltrans Districts and between the two regions is fundamental. Caltrans has initiated a study of highway facilities near the County line in response to its IRP participation. The study area proposed is centered on Interstate 15, extending from State Route (SR) 76 to I-215.

James Bond said the study area should extend farther south, because there are relatively few problems between SR 76 and I-215. Staff responded that the southern boundary of the study was proposed at SR 76 because the focus of the study was coordination between the two Caltrans Districts and the two regions. Supervisor Slater-Price said that proposed HOV lanes in this corridor could accommodate Bus Rapid Transit service.

Bill Mosby (Caltrans District 8) said that Caltrans is waiting on the final I-15 IRP report so that this cooperative I-15 study can be tailored to support IRP implementation. He said that a similar effort was undertaken by Caltrans on the SR 91 corridor near Corona, but that this new study appears to be the first inter-district Caltrans coordination effort in Southern California. In response to a question regarding the coordination of this study with other regional and local agencies, Caltrans responded that its work would be coordinated through the IRP Policy committee and Technical Working Group.

The Committee discussed the importance of goods movement in the I-15 corridor. This truck traffic will be affected by gas prices and freight originating in Mexico. Supervisor Slater-Price suggested that the rail system should be enhanced to transport goods and to move people to the east. Mr. Bond indicated that rail improvements need to be made correctly in both the coastal and inland rail corridors. Ed Gallo agreed that the rail system should be improved from the border towards the east.

In response to this discussion, Bill Figge noted that the initial Caltrans effort is directed toward forecasting both freight and personal travel. Although conditions are changing, regional travel forecasts have been fairly accurate in the past. The Committee members discussed the potential opening of HOV lanes for the use of hybrid fuel vehicles. This action could be counter-productive. In the SCAG region, many of the HOV facilities are approaching capacity.

Councilmember Thomas Buckley asked that the study identify early implementation freeway improvements that would be fairly easy to build. Near-term operating restrictions on the highway system, such as truck operating hours, also were discussed. Policy Committee members discussed the changing needs of goods movement. Caltrans staff indicated that initial recommendations from their study would be available in about three months.

6. Next Steps/ Next Meeting Date

The I-15 IRP Interregional strategies and project report will be presented to the SANDAG Board of Directors on July 23, 2004 and to the WRCOG Board of Directors in August or September 2004.

Staff will forward the recommended interregional strategies and project report to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) by the end of June. In a report to the State legislature, HCD will combine the I-15 IRP conclusions with programs developed in other HCD demonstration projects throughout the State.

Bill Hodge said that WRCOG staff is actively meeting with economic development agencies in southwestern Riverside County. This program will develop sub-regional goals for the group and will invite cooperation with other economic development agencies in San Diego County over the next six months.

Caltrans has not yet taken action on a joint interregional grant application made by SANDAG and WRCOG. This grant would primarily fund the identification of employment clusters in the corridor. Bill Figge said that interregional funding also may be available through other Caltrans programs.

September 17, 2004 is the normal date for the next IRP Policy Committee meeting; however, this date conflicts with a California League of Cities meeting. A Policy Committee meeting in the fall will be determined through telephone and e-mail contact with Policy Committee members.