

November 3, 2011

M E M O

TO: Legislation and Government Organization Committee

FROM: Ezra Rapport *er*
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Proposed Legislation Authorizing Pilot Project Providing Funding for Regional EIR and Local Specific Plans

The attached draft fact sheet describes proposed legislation that we are working with our legislative advocate to market in Sacramento during the next legislative session. We have received a preliminary indication of willingness to carry this legislation by Senator Joe Simitian (San Mateo County). We will be scheduling a meeting with him and members of the ABAG leadership early in the next legislative session. Sup. Jacobs Gibson has laid the initial ground work for this meeting to take place.

You will note from the fact sheet this measure authorizes funding for the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) as a pilot program to support regional environmental review and allocate grants to local governments for the purpose of implementing growth in Priority Development Areas that have been adopted by ABAG. It is the intent of this measure to encourage new infill development in those areas identified as appropriate for increased density in the regional Sustainable Communities Strategies as a pilot program to support the implementation of Senate Bill 375 (Steinberg, 2008). Local governments will retain full control over the environmental review process for both Priority Development Areas and projects within them.

One of the purposes of Priority Development Areas is to resolve planning conflicts within, among, and between local and regional agencies which require the preparation of environmental impact reports for specific projects and developments, including infill projects. Infill projects in Priority Development Areas are necessary to meet objectives for sustainable growth defined in SB 375. The current lack of comprehensive planning requires inefficient and duplicative analysis to be produced on a project-by-project basis, making infill development impractical by shifting these costs and risks to project sponsors. Examples of such analyses include: GHG emissions; vehicular and stationary air emissions; regional and local street congestion; storm water management; flooding and sea level rise; environmental justice; other resource management or resiliency measures.

While state resources are limited, we know that the Governor is a proponent of streamlined environmental reviews and supports the sustainable communities strategy process. If we are successful in getting this legislation on the floor, passed by the

legislature, and signed by the Governor in the next session, it will provide much needed funding for ABAG and local governments and assist us in advancing the planning goals of the Sustainable Communities Strategy and could serve as a model to be implemented statewide.

I look forward to discussing this proposed legislation and strategy with you at the L&GO Committee Meeting on November 17th.