



Date: July 17, 2002
To: Inter-Regional Partnership Members
From: IRP Staff
RE: IRP Program: Future Subject Areas

Background

On May 15, 2002, the Inter-Regional Partnership (IRP) discussed future program topics for the Partnership to consider. The discussion took place in the context of the overall goals of the IRP, regionalism and inter-regional cooperation. Nick Bollman, President and CEO of the California Center for Regional Leadership and chair for the 2002 Speaker's Commission on Regionalism provided some introductory comments and presented the Commission's final report *The New California Dream: Regional Solutions for 21st Century Challenge*.

Staff recommends that the IRP discuss the proposed next steps and adopt a prioritized list for further development.

Discussion

Air Quality

Smog Check II legislation will be discussed by the Partnership in the following agenda item. Other examples of air quality issues that may affect the IRP region include AB 2824 (Cogdill), which is a bill that would provide state assistance to subsidize the retrofitting of oil refineries to meet new federal diesel fuel standards, and efforts by environmental groups to require that agriculture interests use cleaner diesel pumps.

Members of the IRP could present air quality issues that interest them, in an effort to facilitate discussion and determine priorities.

Economic Development

The Partnership expressed interest in developing an economic development plan for the IRP region. The intent would be to create a plan to promote economic development in the Central Valley and eastern Alameda and Contra Costa Counties as a tool for equalizing the jobs/housing imbalance in these areas.

Staff recommends that the IRP work with the economic development groups involved with the IRP to develop priorities, to address and report on the feasibility of such a plan.

Water

Partnership members noted that the East Bay Municipal Utility District and San Joaquin County are competing for the same water resources in order to secure enough water for future development projections.

The Partnership could promote and facilitate efforts to bring competing water agencies within the IRP region to the same table. The IRP could use the resulting forum to encourage the development of

coordinated water resource access plans to be forwarded to the State. A first step might be to invite water interests and agencies for an informational discussion at a future IRP meeting.

Transportation

Transportation issues are a founding interest of the IRP. The two main transportation issues identified by the Partnership are the lengthy commutes created by the jobs/housing imbalance in the IRP region and the resulting increased congestion in the Altamont Pass. While the Jobs/Housing Opportunity Zones are one attempt to address transportation issues in the region, there may be other approaches that the IRP can take to address these issues.

Staff has identified two actions that the Partnership could take to address transportation issues in the IRP region. The first would be to survey the region's transportation management agencies to determine whether their plans address inter-regional transportation issues. The results could be used by the Partnership to encourage the affected transportation management agencies to adopt policies and plans that address transportation issues of inter-regional significance. The IRP could also work with the transportation management agencies in an effort to get them to prioritize transportation projects in a way that complements the transportation efforts of each agency.

The second action the Partnership could take is to develop a process to enable the IRP to promote the development of public transit projects of inter-regional significance. The IRP could identify key members that can attend planning commission and local government meetings to speak in support of, or offer suggestions to, proposed transit projects of inter-regional significance. Also, the Partnership could provide support for securing state and federal funding for transit projects of interest to the Partnership. An initial step in this process would be to identify existing, and considered, transit projects within the IRP region.

Requested Action

Staff requests that the IRP members discuss the suggestions, prioritize the issues, and direct staff to develop plans to address the issues of interest as the group determines its agenda for the next year.