REPORT

DATE: March 1, 2007

TO: Administrative Committee
Regional Council

FROM: Wayne Moore, Chief Financial Officer, 213-236-1804, moore@scag.ca.gov

SUBJECT: Authorization to Apply for FHWA Grants Administered by Caltrans

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Authorize SCAG to apply for, and if awarded, accept, The Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP) Program and Public Lands and Highways Discretionary Program (PLHD) grant funds.

BACKGROUND:

For the first time in several years the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is accepting applications for The Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP) Program and Public Lands and Highways Discretionary Program (PLHD) grant funds. These grant funds, administered by Caltrans, have been earmarked by Congress for the past several years. This year, SCAG was advised in February that applications are being solicited nationwide from states, MPOs, cities and Indian Tribes for both transportation planning and implementation projects. Applications are due to Caltrans the second week in March, with awards expected to be announced in late spring.

TCSP

Approximately $51 million in TCSP funds and $79 million PLHD funds are to be awarded nationwide. FHWA recommends each individual funding request to be in the $500,000 to $1 million range, with a 20% local match requirement. The TCSP program funds projects which accomplish the following: improve the efficiency of the transportation system of the United States; reduce environmental impacts of transportation; reduce the need for costly future public infrastructure investments; ensure efficient access to jobs, services, and centers of trade; examine community development patterns and identify strategies to encourage private sector development patterns and investments that support these goals.

Planning assistance under the TCSP Program is intended to provide financial resources to States and communities to explore integrating their transportation programs with community preservation and environmental activities. Grants will be awarded for planning activities that will achieve this integration, meet the purposes of the program described above and are innovative. This may include, for example, public and private involvement activities; improving conditions for bicycling and walking; better and safer operation of existing roads, signals and transit systems; development of new types of transportation financing and land-use alternatives; development of new programs and tools to measure success; and the creation of new planning tools and policies necessary to implement TCSP-related initiatives.

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Given the constrained time frame to prepare and submit applications, SCAG applications are currently under development. However, it is anticipated that an application will be submitted for Compass Blueprint funding because it is very responsive to the TCSP program criteria referenced above.

PLDH

PLHD funds are available for transportation projects that provide access to Federal lands or facilities. PLHD funds, which require no local match, are available for transportation planning, research, engineering, and construction of the highways, roads, and parkways, and of transit facilities within the Federal public lands, including Indian tribal land. SCAG is exploring the submittal of an application for a transportation planning project for tribal land.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Awarded projects will provide additional funding and the required associated match in SCAG's OWP to conduct the approved projects.

Reviewed by:

Division Manager

Affirmed by:

Department Director

Affirmed by:

Chief Financial Officer