

**COUNTY OF SONOMA
AGENDA ITEM
SUMMARY REPORT**

Clerk of the Board Use Only
 Meeting Date: Held Until
 ___/___/___ ___/___/___
 Agenda Item No: Agenda Item No:
 _____ _____

Department: Permit and Resource Management
 Department

() 4/5 Vote Required

Contact:
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Board Date:
 July 14, 2009

Deadline for Board Action:
 July 17, 2009

AGENDA SHORT TITLE:

ABAG Priority Development Area Designation

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION:

Resolution authorizing PRMD to submit applications for ABAG's Priority Development Area designation.

CURRENT FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT

EXPENDITURES

ADD'L FUNDS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL

Estimated Cost \$

Contingencies \$
 (Fund Name:)

Amount Budgeted \$

Unanticipated Revenue \$
 (Source:)

Other Avail Approp \$
 (Explain below)

Other Transfer(s) \$
 (Source:)

Additional Requested: \$

Add'l Funds Requested: \$

Explanation (if required):

Prior Board Action(s):

None

Alternatives - Results of Non-Approval:

The County of Sonoma would not be eligible, or as competitive, for funding opportunities related to planning for "complete communities," transportation improvements to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled, and affordable housing.

On File with Clerk: ABAG PDA Application Packets for: 1) The Springs; Sonoma Valley; 2) Russian River/West County; 3) Airport/Larkfield

Background:

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) has announced a third round of applications from local governments in the nine county San Francisco Bay Area for designation of Priority Development Areas (PDA) to support their "Focusing Our Vision" regional development and conservation planning program. The FOCUS program unites the efforts of four regional agencies in partnership with congestion management agencies including SCTA, transit providers, and local governments throughout the Bay Area. It promotes planning for and developing "complete communities." Planning principles associated with complete communities reflect development patterns common to older cities and towns: a mix of land uses, a compact development pattern that is pleasant to walk in, a central core that provides goods and services for day to day needs as well as social gathering opportunities, an interconnected street and pedestrian system, transit opportunities, access to recreation, a variety of housing options, and local job opportunities. PDA designation is used by regional and state agencies as a basis in considering where incentives and assistance is needed to support local efforts that encourage infill near transportation. Participating local governments are eligible to apply for a variety of capital funds and planning grants within their jurisdiction. This program has made available \$7.5 million in Station Area Planning Grants in the past, and in two to three years will make available \$15 million in additional grants. There are many unincorporated communities that could benefit from bus station area planning in core mixed use areas. Additionally, regional agencies are working to develop capital infrastructure funding to support "complete communities." One potential source is discretionary transportation funding from MTC's long-range Transportation 2035 Plan.

PDA's are locally-identified, infill opportunity areas near transit, where amenities and services can be developed to meet the day-to-day needs of residents in a pedestrian-friendly environment served by transit. The compact growth envisioned through these PDA's is based in large part on local aspirations and community context. By planning and developing walkable neighborhoods with amenities such as shopping, restaurants, job opportunities, parks, schools, and childcare, these areas can be attractive to both families with children and the aging population that may no longer want to live in a single family home on a large, high-maintenance property. PDA's enhance existing neighborhoods and give people choices while helping reduce traffic congestion, provide more affordable homes and protect the environment by reducing sprawl. A significant benefit of a more compact growth pattern is climate protection. With housing, jobs, shops and services in close proximity to one another and to transit services, cumulative contributions to transportation-related carbon emissions are reduced, helping to address concerns with global climate change.

Attachments:

Resolution authorizing ABAG PDA Applications

On File With Clerk:

1. The Springs, Sonoma Valley PDA Application
2. Russian River/West County PDA Application
3. Airport/Larkfield PDA Application
4. FOCUS Program Goals

CLERK OF THE BOARD USE ONLY

Board Action (If other than "Requested")

Vote:

Background: (Continued)

PDA Application Areas:

Sonoma County has a population of approximately 486,000. Approximately one-third of the population lives in the unincorporated area, one-third lives in the City of Santa Rosa and one-third is divided between the remaining eight incorporated cities. Many of Sonoma County's unincorporated communities which are served by public sewer and water have a larger population than many of the cities. Sonoma County's General Plan 2020 has strict policies regarding allocating growth within its Urban Service Area boundaries and preserving surrounding agricultural and open space lands. The General Plan also envisions that new private development and public infrastructure and amenities are provided that will enhance livability and sustainability in the Urban Service Area communities. The goals of ABAG's FOCUS program are in line with Sonoma County's GP2020 policies for compact urban boundaries and sustainable communities. Three unincorporated areas have been identified for potential PDA designation based on existing planning, transit potential, and population size: 1) The Springs, Sonoma Valley; 2) Russian River/West County; 3) Airport/Larkfield.

The Springs, Sonoma Valley. The proposed PDA area contains a population of over 16,000 (within over 5,500 housing units) - larger than five of Sonoma County's nine incorporated cities including the City of Sonoma with a population of about 10,000. The area within the proposed PDA boundary is approximately 1,800 acres.

Community involvement in The Springs Area has recently resulted in the preparation of The Springs Redevelopment Area Strategic Action Plan. The action plan is intended to prioritize redevelopment activities associated with the recently updated Redevelopment Plan for this area. The development of new plans for these areas will include community outreach and participation - particularly with regard to any new Local Area Development Guidelines or Urban Design Standards. The Springs Area is an MTC identified "Community of Concern." Currently, the Sonoma County Transportation Authority is working on a Community Based Transportation Plan that involves substantial community involvement and is expected to be completed in the fall of 2009.

Russian River/West County. This proposed PDA area contains a population of approximately 11,000 in 4,800 occupied housing units - larger than four of Sonoma County's nine incorporated cities, with approximately the same population as Healdsburg. The area had a 23% vacancy rate in 2000 due to the large number of homes being used for vacation purposes, either as rentals or second homes. The area within the proposed PDA boundary is approximately 4,000 acres. There is an additional population of 5,000 adjacent to the PDA in associated Census Block Group areas, bringing the total population in close proximity to this PDA to over 16,000. Forestville and Graton have been added to the Russian River area because of the shared bike lane, transit routes, and potential in these two communities for enhancing the core areas through infill development potential.

Community involvement in the Russian River Area has involved the Russian River Redevelopment Oversight Committee, a local group authorized by the Board of Supervisors to actively participate and vote on proposed redevelopment projects associated with the Redevelopment Plan. Community Involvement also occurred with the preparation of the affordable housing strategy for the Russian River Area. MTC has designated the Russian River area as a "Community of Concern," and as a result, the Lower Russian River Community Based Transportation Plan (CBTP) has recently been adopted. This CBTP, prepared by the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, involved community outreach, a survey and a priority list for community needs. Forestville has an actively involved citizenry that is pro-active in planning and transportation issues (such as a proposed round about in central Forestville) and participating with Sonoma County government and staff.

Background: (Continued)

Airport/Larkfield. This proposed PDA area contains a population of over 8,800 (and over 3,300 housing units). It is larger than three of Sonoma County's nine incorporated cities and has approximately the same population as Cloverdale. The area within the proposed PDA boundary is approximately 3,400 acres. This proposed PDA contains several regionally important uses: the Sonoma County Airport, the Airport Industrial Business Park, The Wells Fargo Performing Arts Center, and a site which has been acquired by Sutter Hospital for the relocation of its existing hospital in the City of Santa Rosa. The proposed PDA is bisected by Highway 101 and the railroad right of way owned by Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART). The PDA area also contains the Larkfield/Wikiup residential community, with schools, parks, and a retail and office core.

This area had nearly 8,000 jobs in 2006 - reflecting the importance of the Airport Business Park as a major County employment destination center. One-third of these 8,000 jobs are held by residents of Santa Rosa, and 10% by residents of Windsor. 80% of jobs are held by residents of Sonoma County. There is currently no planned SMART rail passenger station for this job destination center near the airport, although the rail corridor bisects the airport business park. The nearest SMART passenger stations are located in Santa Rosa (Jennings Avenue and Railroad Square) and downtown Windsor.

Also affecting travel patterns in this area are Sonoma County Airport's successful re-introduction of commercial airline service from the Sonoma County Airport several years ago, and plans to extend a runway to accommodate more commercial airline service and expand terminal and parking areas. An Airport Master Plan update and EIR are currently underway which will assess travel modes to the airport.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends adoption of the attached resolution authorizing three applications to ABAG for designation of Priority Development Areas in The Springs, Russian River/West County, and Airport/Larkfield areas.