

REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

SUBJECT: PRESENTATION TO UPDATE THE CITY COUNCIL ON THE REDLANDS PASSENGER RAIL PROJECT

DISCUSSION:

The Redlands Passenger Rail Project is a proposed high capacity transit system with eventually up to ten (10) transit stations along a nine (9) mile corridor between downtown San Bernardino and the University of Redlands (See Exhibit "A" for train station locations). The first phase of the project will be funded by San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) and include three (3) stations in Redlands – New York Street, Downtown and the University of Redlands. SANBAG will be working to secure federal funding from FTA through New Starts and/or Small Starts Programs for the second phase station areas, including the permanent mode of transit.

Staff and representatives from SANBAG and HDR Engineering (Consultant to SANBAG) have prepared a presentation to update the City Council on the efforts undertaken in pursuit of the Redlands Passenger Rail Project. SANBAG has agreed to fund two Program Environmental Impact Reports (PEIR). The PEIRs will be utilized by the City of Redlands and the City of San Bernardino to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the necessary changes to the General Plan and zoning regulations to accommodate transit-oriented development. The existing land use densities within a half-mile radius of the planned station areas are not sufficiently transit supportive to achieve an adequate project rating based on the Federal Transit Administration measurement criteria.

To move toward this goal, the General Plan land use designations and zoning classifications in the Cities of Redlands and San Bernardino will need to be amended to provide for more pedestrian and transit supportive land uses and densities around the planned Redlands Passenger Rail stations. Increasing land use density within station areas will increase the Redlands Passenger Rail ridership potential along the corridor, and help support sustainable economic and community development. Staff has been working with SANBAG and HDR, as well as the University of Redlands and Esri, in developing Transit Village Plans for each of the five (5) stations planned in Redlands. The Redlands Passenger Rail Project will provide economic development opportunities by providing an important new element in the transit system to support the participating jurisdictions' ability to:

- Continue to attract new businesses and to retain existing businesses;
- Create viable locations for new businesses, new jobs, and new housing at underutilized sites;

- Support convenient compact development patterns with a variety and density of uses, integrate well-designed pedestrian systems and streetscapes, and increase opportunities to commute by walking or biking;
- Provide transit opportunities to reduce vehicle miles traveled; and,
- Support local and regional planning goals for the development of transit corridors through the Inland Empire.

Initiating the preparation of the PEIRs will be the next phase in the implementation of the Redlands Passenger Rail Project. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SANBAG and the cities of Redlands and San Bernardino will be prepared in order to provide the cities with a level of environmental review/clearance sufficient to present to their respective City Councils for consideration and adoption of General Plan Amendments and/or other substantial modifications to their respective zoning codes. As indicated previously, this is necessary to encourage transit and pedestrian oriented development through the incorporation of mixed use designations and a greater intensity of development at each of the station areas. After the MOU has been reviewed by the City Attorney and staff, the document will be brought forward to the City Council for consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No action is under consideration at this time.

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment "A": Map of the Redlands Passenger Rail Station Areas

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