ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 9, 2012
10:00 a.m.

CVAG Offices
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 119
Palm Desert, CA 92260
(760) 346-1127

Teleconferencing will be available at:
Imperial Irrigation District
1653 W. Main Street
El Centro CA 92243

THIS MEETING IS HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE.
ACTION MAY RESULT ON ANY ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER (Councilmember Mike Wilson, City of Indio, Vice Chair)

2. ROLL CALL
A. Member Roster

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS
This is the time and place for any person wishing to address the Energy and Environmental Resources Committee to do so.
5. COMMITTEE MEMBER/DIRECTOR COMMENTS

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approval of the January 12, 2012 Energy & Environmental Resources Committee Minutes

B. Receive and File

1) Energy and Environmental Resources Committee Attendance Roster

7. DISCUSSION / ACTION

A. Consider Changing the Energy & Environmental Resources Committee Meeting date – Katie Barrows

RECOMMENDATION: Consider various alternative dates for the regular meeting and, if appropriate, make a recommendation to the Executive Committee.

B. Single-Use Plastic Bag Ordinance Presentation – Missy Wightman, City of Palm Desert

RECOMMENDATION: Consider Potential for Regional Single-Use Plastic Bag Ordinance and provide input to staff.

C. Presentation of 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy by SCAG

D. Authorize a Regional Application for South Coast AQMD Emissions Reduction funding in Support of the Whitewater Parkway 1e11 Project and related programs - Tom Kirk

RECOMMENDATION: Executive Committee:
1) Authorize submittal of an application for grant funds from the South Coast Air Quality Management District for the AB 1318 Mitigation Fees Fund for Emissions Reduction Projects related to the CPV Sentinel Energy Project;
2) Authorize the Executive Director to complete all actions necessary to develop and submit this grant application; and
3) Request letters of support, commitment, or participation from member agencies, signed by the City Manager, or as required by the grant program.

E. Plug-in Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan/California Energy Commission Grant Review - Katie Barrows

Staff will provide a verbal update.
F. **Green for Life Update** – Katie Barrows

Staff will provide a verbal update.

8. **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

9. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Energy & Environmental Resources Committee will not meet in March.

**Next Scheduled Meeting:**

The Energy & Environmental Resources Committee is currently scheduled for April 12, 2012 pending action taken under Item 7A. The meeting location will remain the same at 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Conference Room 119, Palm Desert.
# Energy and Environmental Resources Committee Members

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## Non-Voting Members

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## Staff

- **Tom Kirk**, Executive Director
- **Katie Barrows**, Director of Environmental Resources
- **Aurora Wilson**, Director of Community Resources
- **Jim Sullivan**, GIS Program Director
- **Jacob Alvarez**, Management Analyst
- **Linda Rogers**, Program Assistant II
1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Energy and Environmental Resources Committee was called to order by Vice Chair Michael Wilson at 12:02 p.m. on January 12, 2012.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Councilmember Patrick Mullany led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Roll call was taken and it was determined that a quorum was present.

**Members Present**
- Councilmember Mike Evans, City of Blythe
- Mayor Kathleen DeRosa, City of Cathedral City
- Mayor Pro Tem Emmanuel Martinez, City of Coachella
- Mayor Yvonne Parks, City of Desert Hot Springs
- Councilmember Patrick Mullany, City of Indian Wells
- Councilmember Michael Wilson, Vice Chair, City of Indio
- Councilmember Linda Evans, City of La Quinta
- Councilmember Cindy Finerty, City of Palm Desert
- Supervisor John J. Benoit, County of Riverside 4th District
- Board Member Anthony Sanchez, Imperial Irrigation District

**Non-voting Members Present**
- Board Member Franz DeKlotz, Coachella Valley Water District

**Members Absent**
- Mayor Steve Pougnet, City of Palm Springs
- Councilmember Gordon Moller, City of Rancho Mirage
- Board Member Nancy Wright, Mission Springs Water District

**Others Present**
- Vice Mayor Sam Patel, City of Blythe
- Vikki Dee Bradshaw, Imperial Irrigation District
- Silvia Paz, Assemblyman Perez’ office
- Natalee Vicencia, Assemblyman Perez’ office
- Jim Ferguson, Ferguson Law Firm
- Buford Crites, Air Quality Management District

The audio file for this committee can be found at: [http://www.cvag.org/minutes.htm](http://www.cvag.org/minutes.htm)
4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sylvia Paz of Assemblyman Perez’ office addressed the committee regarding mitigation funding for AB1318 expressing the Assemblyman’s concerns regarding the intent of the legislation and those areas affected most by the Sentinel Power Plant in terms of air quality and public health.

Luis Olmedo commented on AB1318 stating this is a valley-wide opportunity to invest in the Coachella Valley with respect to some of the air quality issues and health hazards. Mr. Olmedo urged members to present this matter to their respective city councils in order to come up with a good model and plan to take to AQMD.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER & DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Katie Barrows discussed the issues and measures to address plastic bags in the Coachella Valley and the potential for an ordinance on plastic bags. The cities of Palm Desert and Indio have discussed the matter and have suggested that CVAG consider the potential to address the plastic bag issue on a regional level. The Committee asked staff to provide more information on the plastic bag issue at the February meeting.

Staff discussed the potential of changing the regular E&E meeting to possibly the first or third Thursday of the month and bringing it back at February’s meeting for discussion. Vice Chair Wilson asked staff to contact members of the committee to determine their availability and have it available at the next meeting.
6. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**APPROVAL:**

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR DEROSA AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER FINERTY TO:

A. Approve the November 10, 2011 Energy & Environmental Resources Committee Minutes.

B. Approve the Used Oil Recycling Program Budget for the 2011/2012 Used Oil Recycling Events

THE MOTION CARRIED.

C. Receive and File

1) Energy and Environmental Resources Committee Attendance Roster

Item C1 was received and filed.

7. **DISCUSSION / ACTION**

A. **Pilot Coachella Valley Feed-in Tariff Program - Motion for Party Status**

Katie Barrows discussed a request to the California Public Utilities Commission for consideration of a pilot feed-in-tariff program in the Coachella and Palo Verde Valleys. A Motion for Party Status was filed by CVAG in order for CVAG to be able to comment on the Feed-in-Tariff Program. Discussion ensued regarding sending a representative to Sacramento to comment before the CPUC.

B. **Consideration of Contract for Energy Program Specialist for Green for Life Program**

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR PRO TEM MARTINEZ AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER FINERTY TO RECOMMEND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPROVE A CONTRACT WITH THE SELECTED CONSULTANT(S) TO PROVIDE SERVICES AS AN ENERGY PROGRAM SPECIALIST AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OR CHAIR TO EXECUTE ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS PENDING REVIEW BY CVAG GENERAL COUNSEL.

THE MOTION CARRIED.

C. **Update on Neighborhood Electric Vehicle/Alternative Transportation Project**

LeGrand Velez, LSA Consulting, provided an overview and evaluation of the NEV Parkways (Whitewater River/aka Parkway 1e11) concept in the Coachella Valley and addressed the analysis to determine if there were any fatal flaws. Analysis revealed that the proposed NEV Parkway does not have any fatal flaws. Tom Kirk discussed a $200,000 grant application from the California Energy Commission (CEC). The PEV Grant would be related to the parkway concept, but it is a stand-alone grant application through the CEC. Supervisor Benoit addressed the Sentinel Air Quality Mitigation Program.
D. Resolution 12-001 Approving an Application for the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant and Incentives Program

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER FINERTY AND SECONDED BY MAYOR DEROSA TO RECOMMEND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: 1) APPROVE RESOLUTION 12-001 AUTHORIZING SUBMITTAL OF AN APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PLANNING GRANT AND INCENTIVES PROGRAM; 2) AUTHORIZ THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO COMPLETE ALL NECESSARY ACTIONS TO SUBMIT THE GRANT APPLICATION, AND 3) REQUEST LETTERS OF SUPPORT FROM MEMBER AGENCIES, SIGNED BY THE CITY MANAGER.

THE MOTION CARRIED.

8. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

None.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Energy & Environmental Resources Committee – Thursday, February 9, 2012, 12:00 noon, at 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert, CA.

The meeting adjourned at 1:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Rogers

Linda Rogers
Program Assistant II
2012 Attendance Roster  
Energy and Environmental Resources Committee

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| Desert Water Agency @ May 2010                    |     |     |     |      |      |     |

V or T = Elected in attendance via Video(V) or Teleconference(T)  
X = Elected member in attendance  
= Member Absent  
= Non-Voting Member Absent

Updated 2-1-2012
Staff Report

Subject: Consider Changing the Energy & Environmental Resources Committee Meeting date

Contact: Katie Barrows, Director of Environmental Resources (kbarrows@cvag.org)

RECOMMENDATION: Consider various alternative dates for the regular meeting and, if appropriate, make a recommendation to the Executive Committee.

BACKGROUND: CVAG has recently made various changes to the meeting schedule for our committees. Committee meetings have been reduced from 10 per year to 7 per year, the meetings of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), comprised of city managers/executive officers, were moved from Friday to Monday, and the meeting time for TAC and Executive Committee has been changed to reduce the impact on member agencies’ schedules. Staff and the TAC members have expressed concerns with policy committees, such as the Energy & Environmental Resources Committee (“E & E”), meeting after the TAC meeting so recommendations or concerns from the elected officials would not be heard by TAC members. The TAC currently meets on the second Monday of the month and the E & E Committee meets on the second Thursday of the month. The Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC) currently also meets on the second Thursday of the month at 11 a.m. prior to E & E.

Following discussion at the January 12 Energy and Environmental Resources Committee meetings, CVAG staff agreed to contact members to determine availability for other potential meeting dates. Some of the potential dates staff has identified include the first and third Thursday of the month with an earlier start time of 9 or 10 a.m. Staff would also like to determine if Friday mornings could work for the members. Staff would like to review the results of this survey with the members and determine if another meeting day/time will work.

FISCAL ANALYSIS: No impact.
RECOMMENDATION: Consider Potential for Regional Single-Use Plastic Bag Ordinance and provide input to staff.

BACKGROUND: At the January 12 meeting, this committee briefly discussed the issue of single-use plastic bags as it relates to our regional effort to “Reduce-Reuse-Recycle.” Two cities, Palm Desert and Indio, have had preliminary discussion about the potential for a single-use plastic bag ordinance. On December 8, 2011, the Palm Desert City Council considered a request from their staff to provide “direction regarding a single-use plastic bag ordinance.” The City Council chose to continue the item to future date and also requested their staff to introduce the item to CVAG and to have City staff meet with local retailers and the Palm Desert Chamber of Commerce to research what effect regulating ‘single-use plastic bags’ would have on the City’s local retailers. The staff report from the City of Palm Desert meeting is attached as it contains a summary of the issues related to plastic bags. The Indio City Council also discussed the plastic bag issue at a recent study session and established a council subcommittee to consider the matter.

The suggestion is that a regional approach to plastic bag ordinance would make sense. On January 9, the CVAG Solid Waste and Recycling Technical Working Group heard a presentation by Missy Wightman, Assistant Planner and Sustainability Coordinator for the City of Palm Desert. The Technical Working Group recommended that this issue be forwarded to the Energy & Environmental Resources Committee for your consideration. Ms. Wightman will make a brief presentation at the February 9 meeting. The item is also on the Technical Advisory Committee agenda for February 13, 2012.

Staff requests that the Committee consider the potential for a regional Single-Use Plastic Bag Ordinance and provide input to staff.

Exhibit:
CITY OF PALM DESERT
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

STAFF REPORT

REQUEST: CITY COUNCIL DIRECTION REGARDING A SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAG ORDINANCE

SUBMITTED BY: Missy Wightman
Assistant Planner

DATE: December 8, 2011

CONTENTS: City of Santa Monica “Ban at a Glance”
Citizens’ Sustainability Committee Minutes

Consideration

By minute motion, that the City Council provide direction to staff regarding an ordinance regulating single-use plastic bags.

Executive Summary

On September 8, 2011, the City Council directed staff to research the environmental effects of single-use plastic bags and how the control of these bags may affect the environment. Additionally, staff was tasked to research incentives and other programs used to promote re-usable bags.

Citizens’ Sustainability Committee Recommendation

At the October meeting of the Sustainability Committee, staff provided educational research, discussed the impacts, and solicited committee member opinions on how to move forward. Seven of the eight committee members stated that this was an important topic that needed to be addressed now and recommended that the City Council move forward with a ban on plastic bags. Member Langford stated he may be “on board”, but that he needed to do some more research on the issue.

Background

This discussion is intended to advise the reader of the impact of plastic bag use on three levels: global, regional, and local.

Global: Plastic bags were designed to be thrown away. They were first introduced in the early 1970’s and by the mid-80’s they became the common way to carry daily groceries. On average, each person uses a single-use plastic bag for approximately 12
minutes and uses approximately 500 plastic bags per year. Although the popular perception is that plastic and paper bags are free when given away by retailers, they do carry a cost, which is passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices and to taxpayers in the form of costs for environmental cleanup. Currently, 5% of those bags are being recycled. These plastic bags are recyclable, but they are not being recycled. So the answer is apparent: source reduction. Source reduction reduces the use of a material source before it becomes municipal solid waste. The idea is if you use less, you pollute less.

Approximately 19 billion bags (or approximately 142,500 tons of single-use plastic bags) are released into the environment each year by Californians alone. Environmental impacts are such that plastic bags, depending on whether they end up in a sealed landfill or the environment, take anywhere from 10 to 1,000 years to degrade. The time frame is really unknown as they may end up in a variety of environments. Plastic bags do not biodegrade, they photodegrade. This means the plastic material breaks into smaller fragments of plastic by exposure to sunlight where they can continue to contaminate soil, waterways, and animals upon digestion. Theoretically, every piece of plastic produced is still “out there”. These small pieces of plastic act almost like a magnetic chemical sponge, accumulating damaging pollutants, and being eaten by animals and continuing to travel up the food chain to our plates.

The Ocean Conservancy conducts an event each year called ‘Trash Free Seas’. Volunteers from around the world conduct a one-day clean-up, documenting everything they find. Plastic bags have accounted for 10-11% of collected debris in the last two years. In 2009, in one day, volunteers collected 819,074 pounds of plastic bag debris. In 2010, in one day, volunteers collected 869,857 pounds of plastic bag debris. This is one day, each year, in only the locations where volunteers participated in the clean-up. This demonstrates that even though plastic bags are recyclable, they aren’t being recycled. In 2009, during the clean-up day, volunteers found and documented 336 marine birds and animals entangled in debris. One hundred twenty birds were alive and released, while the other 216 were found dead. Wildlife does not just become entangled in debris, but often injests the debris found floating in their ocean home. Many varying debris items account for these injuries and deaths that are hard to number, but are approximated at over 100,000 per year. Plastic bags are a real concern as identified by the Ocean Conservancy.

Regional: On July 1, 2007, the new law AB 2449 required large grocery stores and pharmacies to take back plastic bags for recycling and to encourage reuse. These stores were additionally required to make reusable bags available to consumers for purchase. Despite the choices of bags, over four years later, this law has had little impact on recycling of plastic bags or the use of reusable bags. Grocery stores are mandated to collect and recycle these bags, but the reality is that many recycling facilities don’t accept plastic bags for recycling. Recycling facilities do not want them as they continually clog recycling sorting machines, the resale rate is low, and large numbers of these bags have to be collected before they amount to any dollar value.
Palm Desert is not immediately adjacent to the ocean, but the lightweight nature of plastic bags allows them to travel great distances in the wind. Palm Desert trash is taken to Lamb's Canyon Sanitary Landfill in Beaumont, and recycling is taken to Burrtec's Escondido facility, where bags have the opportunity to be picked up by the wind and impact environments other than the local Coachella Valley.

Many California cities are moving forward now with their own legislation in light of a recent California Supreme Court case won by the City of Manhattan. Save the Plastic Bag Coalition, a pro-plastic bag group, sued the city for not performing an Environmental Impact Report before enacting a ban on single-use plastic bags. The court determined that a full Environmental Impact Report was not necessary and a mitigated negative declaration was sufficient to comply with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act. The California Supreme Court ruled that common sense and substantial evidence support the city's determination that their ordinance would not have a significant adverse environmental effect.

The following California cities and towns have already implemented local ordinances banning plastic bags: San Francisco, Malibu, Fairfax, Manhattan Beach, Palo Alto, Santa Monica, Calabasas, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Jose. The California counties that have implemented ordinances are Los Angeles, Marin County, Santa Cruz, and Santa Clara. Los Angeles county interviews have suggested that officials hope that the state takes note of such a large local action should plastic bag legislation come before the state again for a vote.

Richard Crockett, General Manager of the West Valley Material Recovery Facility for Burrtec in Fontana, states that they do not advertise that plastic bags are recyclable. (Mike Veto, Burrtec's Director of Municipal Services, stated that Palm Desert's refuse is sent to the landfill and recycling to the facility in Escondido, where plastic bags are treated the same as in Fontana.) According to Mr. Crockett, recycling the bags is difficult for Burrtec due to the following reasons:

- Plastic bags are difficult to recover and to manage once recovered. They take up a tremendous amount space, which results in little material weight recovered.

- The bags get stuck in the equipment, resulting in damage to the equipment and the need for excessive cleaning.

- The bags make recovery of the other recyclables more difficult; they are harder to see because of the film, and the bags contaminate the fiber grades.

- The quality of the film plastic recovered is very poor due to its high contamination and the low quality film used to make the bags.
The amount of film plastic in the recycling stream is pretty high, even though film bags are not identified as acceptable in our recycling programs.

When asked about plastic bag recycling, Mr. Crockett suggests that people recycle their plastic bags at the grocery store.

"The customers served by West Valley MRF have agreed not to add them to the list of acceptable recycling items because of the concern with the volume that is out there. We get so many now and do our best to recover (them). If we added them to the list it would be overwhelming. Every bag we recover is by hand -- there is not mechanical separation available -- and I fear the effort that would be required to recover all of them would be extremely burdensome.

I am not sure where the grocery stores send their bags but I would guess to the same film buyers we do business with. Another benefit to taking them back to the store (and not putting in the recycling materials going to the MRF) is that the bags are cleaner and should have a higher value. In the recycling stream they become extremely dirty during collection and processing."

Local: In 2009, the City of Palm Desert started recycling plastic bags by implementing the 'bag-in-a-bag' program where a homeowner can stuff as many plastic grocery bags as they can into one bag and throw it into their curbside recycling container. However, individual plastic bags are less likely to be recycled due to their light weight nature which allows them to fly away from garbage bins, garbage trucks, landfills, big-box stores, anywhere.

In preparation of this report, staff turned to local individuals and organizations who could speak to the impact of single-use plastic bags on the local desert environment.

Dr. Allan Muth with the Boyd Deep Canyon Desert Research Center, remotely located south of Palm Desert in the Santa Rosa Mountain range, states that these bags blow in every year off of Highway 74 and Vista Point. They do have an impact on the environment; desert tortoises have eaten them to their detriment, and they have been found in coyote scat. Dr. Muth also discussed the fact that plastic uses a tremendous amount of oil and only breaks up into smaller and smaller pieces, but never degrades, so theoretically every piece of plastic ever created is still in the environment.

Danny Ortiz, Natural Resource Specialist with the Forest Service, who works along with the Friends of the Desert Mountains, reports that just the other day they picked up around four to six plastic bags on a trail clean-up in less than a one mile stretch. These bags are litter that they regularly see and clean-up. She reports that she hasn’t been able to study the effects on animals, but they definitely do not want to see them here as they are a concern to bighorn sheep and desert tortoises.
Carlos Hernandez, City of Palm Desert Maintenance Services Manager, reports that plastic bags are a common form of litter collected by maintenance staff in certain parts of Palm Desert. Also, they are a common form of debris in storm drains and storm drain inlets. Last summer, the City contracted out the work to remove and clean these facilities to ensure their successful operation. Plastic bags were a part of the debris removed.

City landscape staff has stated that these bags are particularly a problem around and near big-box stores where the bags are distributed in large numbers. Although they don’t consider this a large maintenance problem, they do have to consistently clean them out of public rights-of-way and medians as the wind blows the bags into the air and they get caught in plants and trees. They reason that, since the City of Palm Desert has a large number of visiting seasonal residents and tourists, it’s important to keep the city looking clean to secure the return visits.

Analysis

Single-use plastic bags have an adverse impact on animal life and the aesthetic quality of the desert. Studies on the environmental effects of marine debris reveal ingestion, entanglement, ecosystem alteration, and invasive species movement. Economic impacts stemming from the bags adversely affect tourism, fishing navigation, and human health and safety.

Switching to paper bags or compostable plastic bags is not a “cure all,” since these bags also have shortcomings. Both types of bags usually enter the waste stream, and frequently end up in a landfill where they still take time to decompose. A lasting solution requires source reduction, such that fewer bags of all types are distributed.

Staff studied several city ordinances enacted in California, and reviewed Santa Monica’s ordinance in particular with the Citizens’ Sustainability Committee. The Santa Monica “ban at a glance” is attached to this report. This program eliminates single-use plastic bag distribution from most retail outlets, and imposes a nominal charge (10¢) on paper bags. The money collected is retained tax free by the merchant to offset any additional costs they incur. There are exceptions to the Santa Monica plastic bag ban, including those bags used for produce at a grocery store and for carry-out food from restaurants. The city also provided a six month outreach and education period prior to implementation. During this time they actively distributed reusable bags at no cost through a variety of outlets.

The Citizens’ Sustainability Committee recommended taking Santa Monica’s approach a step further, asking staff to research elimination of the plastic bags used for produce and take-out food at restaurants. If directed to move forward, staff will continue research of the regulations in other communities and will bring a draft ordinance to the Citizens’ Sustainability Committee for further review, working along with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce to promote a positive change. Once complete, staff would
return the proposed ordinance to the City Council for consideration.

**Fiscal Analysis**

Preparation of an environmental document and a public education campaign would be needed to move forward with an ordinance banning single-use plastic bags. A conceptual budget for the various elements of implementing the ban is as follows:

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<tr>
<td>Newspaper, Television Ads, Public Service Announcements, Etc.</td>
<td>$10 - 15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of Re-usable Bags</td>
<td>$10 - 20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$25 - 45,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Money for this use is not included in the budget for the current fiscal year, but a portion of the cost could come from AB 939 funds (the city's recycling funds) to purchase recycled content re-usable bags for public distribution.

**Recommendation**

Staff requests that the City Council direct staff to prepare a draft ordinance and CEQA document based upon the general Santa Monica model: a ban of most single-use plastic bags; a charge for paper bags; retention by the merchant of the charge for paper bags; and a dedicated outreach and education program before implementation.

With such direction, staff will work with the Sustainability Committee and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce to bring an ordinance and detailed fiscal analysis forward for consideration.

Submitted by: Missy Wightman
Assistant Planner

Department Head: Lauri Aylaian
Director of Community Development

Approval: John M. Wohlmuth
City Manager
Indio looks at banning plastic bags

The Desert Sun (Palm Springs, California)

BYLINE: By, Xochitl Peña

INDIO – Indio City Councilman Mike Wilson is bothered by the sight of plastic bags that get caught on chain link fences or tangled in tumbleweeds in his city.

The bags look bad, are an eyesore and are not biodegradable, he said.

Indio is now the second city in the valley to take steps to solve that problem.

On Wednesday during a special study session, the Indio City Council appointed Wilson and Mayor Pro Tem Elaine Holmes to a subcommittee that will create a sustainability commission to consider an ordinance banning the use of these bags in the city.

“It certainly promotes our environmental stewardship,” said Planning Manager Joe Lim of the notion.

“Ultimately we hope it would eliminate some nuisance issues,” he said.

Such an ordinance however, would also come with challenges, Lim said during a presentation to the City Council.

The use of paper bags is more expensive, and grocery stores and businesses could then pass that cost on to their customers.

Councilman Sam Torres said he has reservations about adoption of such an ordinance because of the extra costs it might create.

“Ultimately it’s the consumer that is paying the price at the checkout, and there is no way I can support anything that puts a great burden on the consumer,” he said.

Indio is following Palm Desert’s lead in considering a ban on plastic bags.

Earlier this month, the Palm Desert City Council decided to continue working on whether to ban plastic bag use within its borders or to decrease their usage.

The city could work with the Coachella Valley Association of Government to make it a regional effort.

Palm Desert has a sustainability committee – similar to the one Indio plans to create – that supported the ban on plastic bags.

Having CVAG lead efforts on a valleywide plastic bag ordinance is a good approach, Wilson said.

However, he would also like to see Indio initiate its own ordinance and perhaps share it with CVAG as a model ordinance.

Once a sustainability committee is created in Indio, it would be charged with looking into a plastic bag ordinance by perhaps working with CVAG and local businesses.

“It’s all a good idea – to come up with ideas to help the environment,” Mayor Glenn Miller said. “I just don’t want to hamper our businesses.”
Subject: Presentation of 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy by SCAG

Contact: Aurora Wilson, Director, Community Resources (awilson@cvag.org)

**Background:** As the metropolitan planning organization for the region, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has prepared the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for more than three decades. The primary goal of the RTP is to increase mobility for the region’s residents and visitors.

The passage of Senate Bill 375 (SB 375) in September 2008, calls for a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from cars, light trucks through integrated transportation land use, housing and environmental planning. SB 375 calls for a Sustainable Communities Strategy (or SCS) to meet emission reduction targets as set forth by the California Air Resources Board and, as such, has been integrated as a required element of the RTP now known as the RTP/SCS.

The draft 2012 RTP/SCS, which covers the period 2012-2035, is the product of stakeholder sessions and numerous planning sessions which were held throughout the region to find out what Southern Californians want to see in their future. It has been released and is now making its way through the communities through outreach workshops sponsored by SCAG. CVAG hosted such a workshop on Tuesday, January 24th.

The formal comment period of the RTP/SCS is 55 days; from December 20th through February 14, 2012. Formal action will be taken by SCAG to adopt the final report in April.

SCAG representatives will be present to provide a brief presentation on the RTP/SCS. Attached is the Draft Plan’s executive summary. For more information on the RTP/SCS please go to [www.scag.ca.gov](http://www.scag.ca.gov) and click on the RTP/SCS.

:attachment
Our Vision

Towards a Sustainable Future

For the past three decades, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has prepared Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) with the primary goal of increasing mobility for the region’s residents and visitors. While mobility is a vital component of the quality of life that this region deserves, it is by no means the only component. SCAG has placed a greater emphasis than ever before on sustainability and integrated planning in the 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), whose vision encompasses three principles that collectively work as the key to our region’s future: mobility, economy, and sustainability.

The 2012 RTP/SCS includes a strong commitment to reduce emissions from transportation sources to both improve public health and meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards as set forth by the federal Clean Air Act. As such, the 2012 RTP contains a regional commitment for the broad deployment of zero and near-zero emission transportation technologies in the 2023-2035 timeframe and clear steps to move towards this objective. This is especially critical for our goods movement system. The development of a world class zero emission freight transportation system is necessary to maintain economic growth in the region, to sustain quality of life and to meet federal air quality requirements. The 2012 RTP puts forth an aggressive strategy for technology development and deployment to achieve this objective. This strategy will have may co-benefits, including energy security, cost certainty, increased public support for infrastructure, GHG reduction and economic development.

Never before have the crucial linkages and interrelationships between the economy, the regional transportation system, and land use been as important as now. For the first time, the 2012 RTP includes a significant consideration of the economic impacts and opportunities provided by the transportation infrastructure plan set forth in the 2012 RTP, considering not only the economic and job creation impacts of the direct investment in transportation infrastructure, but also the efficiency gains in terms of worker and business economic productivity and goods movement. The 2012 RTP outlines a transportation infrastructure investment strategy that will beneficially impact Southern California, the state, and the nation in terms of economic development, competitive advantage, and overall competitiveness in the global economy in terms of attracting and retaining employers in the Southern California region.

The 2012 RTP/SCS will transform the region, serving as a blueprint for improving quality of life for our residents by providing more choices for where they will live, work, and play, and how they will move around. Its safe, secure, and efficient transportation systems will provide improved access to opportunities, such as jobs, education, and healthcare. Its emphasis on transit and active transportation will allow our residents to lead a healthier, active lifestyle. It will create jobs, ensure our region’s economic competitiveness through strategic investments in our goods movement system, and improve environmental and health outcomes for 22 million residents by 2035. More importantly, the RTP/SCS will also preserve what makes the region special, including our stable and successful neighborhoods and our array of open spaces for future generations to enjoy.

The Setting

In order to successfully overcome the challenges that lie before us, this RTP/SCS first recognizes the impacts that recent events and long-term trends will have on how people choose to live and move around.

**ECONOMIC RECESSION**

[800,000] jobs have been lost in the region due to the Great Recession

The economic turmoil faced by many of the region’s residents is likely to impact their housing choices and travel behavior, including their transportation mode choice and day-to-day travel patterns. This will potentially require different types of transportation solutions.
POPULATION GROWTH

The region will add [4 million] people by 2035

This growth in population will only exacerbate our region’s existing mobility challenges. The SCAG region is already home to 18 million people, or 49 percent of California’s population. If it were its own state, the SCAG region would be the fifth most populous in the nation. Furthermore, this expected growth will occur mainly in the suburban inland counties of Riverside and San Bernardino, adding to the existing imbalance of jobs and housing in the region, and requiring people to travel which contributes to transportation and air quality challenge. In addition, with the aging of the Baby Boomer generation (the share of the population 65 years or older will increase from 11 percent in 2010 to 18 percent in 2035), the region will soon have a greater need for efficient modes of transportation for those who can no longer drive as their main form of transportation.

MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Over the past few decades, the region has invested heavily in a multimodal transportation system that serves as the backbone of the region’s economic well-being.

THE SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

- [21,630] miles of highways and arterials
- [470] miles of passenger rail
- [6] air carrier airports

Nine out of ten trips in the region utilize our extensive highway and arterial network, which supports a host of modes, including the automobile, transit, and active transportation. The region is also home to a growing number of passenger rail lines, none of which existed 20 years ago. Our regional aviation system is the nation’s largest and most complex in terms of number of airports and aircraft, and our goods movement industry plays a critical role in sustaining the economy of our region. The importance of this system to our region cannot be understated.

THE REGION IN MOTION

- [446 million] miles driven each day
- [81 million] air passengers each year
- [45%] more urban rail riders between 2000 and 2006
- [34%] of our jobs depend on the goods movement industry
Challenges

The challenges facing the region are daunting. When combined, our mobility, air quality, and funding challenges present an imposing threat to the quality of life for both current and future residents.

MOBILITY CHALLENGES

The region's roadways are the most congested in the nation, and traffic relief is critical, even more so in our current economic situation. By failing to address our congestion, we have foregone jobs—every 10 percent decrease in congestion can bring an employment increase of about 132,000 jobs.

SAFETY CHALLENGES

On the brighter side, our roadways are among the nation's safest, with rate of fatal and injury collisions declining dramatically since the 1930's. But as we continue to successfully improve safety for our motorists, we cannot neglect the alarming fatality rates of those traveling on other modes of transportation.

AIR QUALITY CHALLENGES

In addition, while Southern California is a leader in reducing emissions and ambient levels of air pollutants are improving, the SCAG region continues to have the worst air quality in the nation and air pollution still causes thousands of premature deaths every year, as well as other serious adverse health effects. The South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) estimates the monetary cost of air pollution in Southern California to be at least $14.6 billion annually.

Even with on-going aggressive control strategies, even more stringent national ozone standards require further oxide of nitrogen (NOx) emission reductions in the SCAG region. In the South Coast Air Basin, for example, it is estimated that NOx emissions will need to be reduced by approximately two-thirds in 2023 and three-quarters in 2030. This is a daunting challenge. The level of emission reduction required is so significant that 2030 emissions forecasted from just three sources—ships, trains, and aircraft—would lead to ozone levels near the federal standard. Because most sources, including cars and factories, are already controlled by over 90 percent, attainment of ozone standards will require broad deployment of zero and near-zero emission technologies in the 2023-2035 timeframe.

Senate Bill 375

New to this RTP, California's Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, or Senate Bill (SB) 375, calls for this RTP to include an SCS that reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from passenger vehicles by 8 percent per capita by 2020 and 13 percent per capita by 2035 compared to 2005, as set by the California Air Resources Board (ARB). SB 375 enhances the State's goals of Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. Meeting the required targets will not be easy, but it must be done for the health and quality of life of current and future generations. Meeting these targets will point the region towards overall sustainability and will provide benefits beyond reducing carbon emissions.
FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

Of all the challenges facing us today, there is perhaps none more critical than funding. With the projected growth in population, employment, and demand for travel, the costs of our multimodal transportation needs surpass projected revenues available from our historic transportation funding source—the gas tax.

State and federal gas taxes have not changed in nearly 20 years. Yet, highway construction costs have grown by 82%.

As a result of years of underinvestment, a significant amount of our roadways and bridges have fallen into a state of disrepair. It is imperative that this situation be addressed. The rate of deterioration will only accelerate with continued deferral, significantly increasing the cost of bringing our assets back into a state of good repair.

Furthermore, with recent declines in transit funding, the region’s transit operators continue to face major obstacles to providing frequent, attractive transit service.

Rail operating costs have increased by over 40% in the past decade.

Intercity transit operators have been forced to cut service by up to 20%.

The region must consider ways to stabilize existing revenue sources and supplement them with reasonably available new sources. This region needs a long-term, sustainable funding plan that supports an efficient and effective transportation system that grows the economy, provides mobility choices, and improves our quality of life.

Our Approach

To address these challenges, SCAG performed a careful analysis of our transportation system, the future growth of our region, and potential new sources of revenue, and embarked on a massive outreach undertaking to hear what the region had to say. While SCAG continued to work closely through hundreds of meetings with stakeholder agencies that it has always collaborated with, it also conducted a series of planning sessions throughout the region to find out what Southern Californians want to see in their future. The result of this multi-year effort is the 2012 RTP/SCS, a shared vision for the region’s sustainable future.

Transportation Investments

The RTP/SCS contains a host of improvements to our multimodal transportation system. These improvements include closures to critical gaps in the network that hinder access to certain parts of the region, as well as the strategic expansion of our transportation system where there is room to grow in order to provide the region with the mobility it needs. These improvements are outlined in TABLE 1.
### TABLE 1  Transportation Investments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)</td>
<td>New BRT routes, extensions, and/or service enhancements in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties</td>
<td>$ 4.6 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Rail Transit (LRT)</td>
<td>New Light Rail routes/extensions in Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties</td>
<td>$ 13.1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Rail Transit (HRT)</td>
<td>Heavy Rail extension in Los Angeles County</td>
<td>$ 11.1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>New and expanded bus service in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties</td>
<td>$ 20.9 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passenger and High-Speed Rail</strong></td>
<td>Metrolink extensions in Riverside County and Metrolink systemwide improvements to provide higher speeds</td>
<td>$ 3.9 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter Rail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Speed Rail</td>
<td>Improvements to the Los Angeles to San Diego (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor with an ultimate goal of providing San Diego-Los Angeles express service in under two hours</td>
<td>$ 47.7 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase I of the California High-Speed Train (HST) project that would provide high-speed service from Los Angeles to the Antelope Valley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active Transportation</strong></td>
<td>Increase our bikeways from 4,315 miles to 10,122 miles, bring 12,000 miles of deficient sidewalks into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), safety improvements, and various other strategies</td>
<td>$ 6.0 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Active Transportation Strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation Demand Management (TDM)</strong></td>
<td>Strategies to incentivize drivers to reduce solo driving:</td>
<td>$ 4.0 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various TDM Strategies</td>
<td>▪ Increase carpooling and vanpooling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Increase the use of transit, bicycling, and walking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Redistribute vehicle trips from peak periods to non-peak periods by shifting work times/days/locations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Encourage greater use of telecommuting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Other “First Mile/Last Mile” strategies to allow travelers to easily connect to and from transit service at their origin and destination. These strategies include the development of mobility hubs around major transit stations, the integration of bicycling and transit through folding-bikes-on-buses programs, triple bike racks on buses, and dedicated racks on light and heavy rail vehicles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation Systems Management (TSM) (includes Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS))</strong></td>
<td>Various TSM Strategies: Enhanced incident management, advanced ramp metering, traffic signal synchronization, advanced traveler information, improved data collection, universal transit fare cards (Smart Cards), and Transit Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) to increase traffic flow and reduce congestion</td>
<td>$ 6.8 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highways</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 72.3 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Flow</td>
<td>Interchange improvements and closures to critical gaps in the highway network to provide access to all parts of the region</td>
<td>$ 18.4 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)/High-Occupancy Toll (HOT)</strong></td>
<td>Closures to gaps in the high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane network and the addition of freeway-to-freeway direct HOV connectors to complete Southern California’s HOV network A connected network of Express/HOT lanes</td>
<td>$ 18.7 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Toll Facilities</strong></td>
<td>Closures to critical gaps in the highway network to provide access to all parts of the region</td>
<td>$ 35.2 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arterials</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 22.1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Arterial Improvements</td>
<td>Spot widenings, signal prioritization, driveway consolidations and relocations, grade separations at high-volume intersections, new bicycle lanes, and other design features such as lighting, landscaping, and modified roadway, parking, and sidewalk widths</td>
<td>$ 22.1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goods Movement (includes Grade Separations)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 47.9 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Goods Movement Strategies</td>
<td>Port access improvements, freight rail enhancements, grade separations, truck mobility improvements, intermodal facilities, and emission reduction strategies</td>
<td>$ 47.9 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aviation and Airport Ground Access</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Included in modal investments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Airport Ground Access Improvements</td>
<td>Rail extensions and improvements to provide easier access to airports, and new express bus service from remote terminals to airports</td>
<td>Included in modal investments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operations and Maintenance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 216.9 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>Operations and maintenance to preserve our multimodal system in a good state of repair</td>
<td>$ 139.3 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highways</td>
<td>Operations and maintenance to preserve our multimodal system in a good state of repair</td>
<td>$ 56.7 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arterials</td>
<td>Operations and maintenance to preserve our multimodal system in a good state of repair</td>
<td>$ 20.9 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial Plan

The 2012 RTP financial plan identifies how much money is available to support the region’s transportation investments. The plan includes a core revenue forecast of existing local, state, and federal sources, along with reasonably available new revenues sources that are likely to materialize within the RTP time frame. These new sources include adjustments to state and federal gas tax rates based on historical trends and recommendations from two national commissions (National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission and National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission) created by Congress, further leveraging of existing local sales tax measures, value capture strategies, potential national freight program/freight fees, as well as passenger and commercial vehicle tolls for specific facilities. Reasonably available revenues also include innovative financing strategies, such as private equity participation.

TABLE 2 presents ten categories of new revenue sources and innovative financing techniques that are considered to be reasonably available and are included in the financially constrained plan. For each funding source, SCAG has examined the policy and legal context of implementation, prepared an estimate of the revenue potential, and identified action steps to ensure the funds are available to implement the region’s transportation vision.

Revenue Sources and Expenditures

FIGURES 1 AND 2 provide a summary of the plan’s forecasted revenues and expenditures. As shown in these figures, the region’s budget over the next 25 years totals an estimated $524.7 billion.

TABLE 2  New Revenue Sources and Innovative Financing Strategies (Nominal Dollars, Billions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bond Proceeds from Local Sales Tax Measures</td>
<td>Issuance of debt against existing sales tax revenues: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties.</td>
<td>$25.6 bil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State and Federal Gas Excise Tax Adjustment</td>
<td>Additional $0.15 per gallon gasoline tax imposed at the state and the federal levels starting in 2017 to 2024—to maintain purchasing power.</td>
<td>$16.9 bil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mileage-Based User Fee (or equivalent fuel tax adjustment)</td>
<td>Mileage-based user fees would be implemented to replace gas tax and augment—estimated at about $0.05 (2011$) per mile and indexed to maintain purchasing power starting 2025.</td>
<td>$110.3 bil (est. increment only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway Tolls (includes toll revenue bond proceeds)</td>
<td>Toll revenues generated from SR-710 Tunnel, I-710 South Freight Corridor, East-West Freight Corridor, segment of the High Desert Corridor, and Regional Express/HOT Lane Network.</td>
<td>$22.3 bil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Equity Participation</td>
<td>Private equity share as may be applicable for key initiatives: e.g., toll facilities; also, freight rail package assumes railroad share of costs for mainline capacity and intermodal facilities.</td>
<td>$2.7 bil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freight Fee/National Freight Program</td>
<td>A national freight program is anticipated with the next federal reauthorization of the surface transportation act. The U.S. Senate’s proposal would establish federal formula funding for the national freight network.</td>
<td>$4.2 bil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Commerce Tax</td>
<td>Although these are existing revenue sources, they generally have not been collected. Potentially, the revenue could be used for transportation purposes, given the relationship between E-commerce and the delivery of goods to California purchasers.</td>
<td>$3.1 bil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Earnings</td>
<td>Interest earnings from toll bond proceeds.</td>
<td>$0.2 bil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Bond Proceeds, Federal Grants &amp; Other for California High Speed Rail Program</td>
<td>State general obligation bonds authorized under the Bond Act approved by California voters as Proposition 1A in 2008; federal grants authorized under American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program; potential use of qualified tax credit bonds; and private sources.</td>
<td>$33.0 bil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Capture Strategies</td>
<td>Assumes formation of special districts including use of tax increment financing for specific initiatives.</td>
<td>$1.2 bil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sustainable Communities Strategy

Within the RTP, the SCS demonstrates the region’s ability to attain and exceed the GHG emission reduction targets set forth by the ARB. The SCS outlines our plan for integrating the transportation network and related strategies with an overall land use pattern that responds to projected growth, housing needs and changing demographics, and transportation demands. The regional vision of the SCS maximizes current local efforts that support the goals of SB 375, as evidenced by several Compass Blueprint Demonstration Projects and various county transportation improvements. The SCS focuses the majority of new housing and job growth in high-quality transit areas and other opportunity areas in existing main streets, downtowns, and commercial corridors, resulting in an improved jobs-housing balance and more opportunity for transit-oriented development. This overall land use development pattern supports and compliments the proposed transportation network that emphasizes system preservation, active transportation, and transportation demand management measures. Finally, the RTP/SCS fully integrates the two subregional SCSs prepared by the Gateway Cities and Orange County Council of Governments.
Measuring Up

The investments in this RTP/SCS are expected to result in significant benefits to the region with respect to transportation and mobility, as well as air quality, economic activity and job creation, sustainability, and environmental justice. They will result in better place-making, lower overall costs, advances in public health and the environment, responsiveness to a changing housing market, and improved accessibility and mobility.

Air Quality and GHG Targets

We will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by [8%] by 2020, [16%] by 2035. This RTP/SCS successfully achieves and exceeds our greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, set by ARB by achieving an 8 percent reduction by 2020 and 16 percent reduction by 2035 compared to the 2005 level on a per capita basis. This RTP/SCS also meets criteria pollutant emission budgets set by EPA. With each passing year, Southern Californians should expect to breathe cleaner air and live healthier lives.

This air quality benefit is made possible largely by more sustainable planning, integrating transportation and land use decisions to allow Southern Californians to live closer to where they work and play, and to high-quality transit service. As a result, more residents will be able to use transit and active transportation as a safe and attractive means of travel.

Location Efficiency

Over [twice] as many households will live near high-quality transit. Share of households living in the High Quality Transit Area will more than double over the plan period signaling a more efficient overall development pattern in the future.

Mobility

Delay on our roadway system will improve over today’s condition. Our roadways will be less congested, allowing our region’s residents to spend less time in traffic onboard a bus or behind the wheel and more time with their families.

Safety

Not only will residents be more mobile, they will also be safer. This RTP/SCS’s emphasis on safety will result in significantly lower accident rates, giving our residents the peace of mind to travel freely throughout the day and come home to their loved ones every night.

Economy

We will generate [4.2 million] jobs. Not only will the region be more mobile, it will also be more prosperous. Implementation of the RTP/SCS will create or sustain jobs today to build transportation infrastructure projects for tomorrow. The 4.2 million total jobs over the life of the RTP/SCS equates to an annual average of 167,900 jobs, and is not limited to the construction industry, but will encompass a broad cross-section of industry clusters.

Investment Effectiveness

We will get [2.90] back for every $1 spent. The RTP/SCS makes dollar sense. While its overall expenditures seem like a huge cost, the region will recover $2.90 for every $1 this RTP/SCS commits, which will only help propel the region to more prosperous days ahead.
Public Participation

The development of the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS involved implementation of one of the most comprehensive and coordinated public participation plan ever undertaken by SCAG. The public and stakeholder involvement program went over and beyond meeting the requirements of SB 375 and the SAFETEA-LU. SCAG engaged the widest range of stakeholder groups, elected officials, special interest groups as well as general public, through a series of workshops and public meetings, as well as SCAG’s policy committees, task forces and subcommittee structure. The input received through this process has truly shaped the Draft 2012 RTP/SCS in a meaningful way. Furthermore, SCAG will continue to involve and engage the stakeholders and the public in the process of refining and finalizing the 2012 RTP/SCS over the next several months through the close of the formal comment period. SCAG has developed a state-of-the-art video and interactive RTP/SCS website called iRTP that will further enhance our capability to engage and involve the stakeholders and the public to continue shaping the 2012 RTP/SCS.

Strategic Plan – Looking Ahead – Beyond the Horizon

The 2012 RTP/SCS proposes investing over $500 billion over the next 25 years to improve the quality of life of the region’s residents by enhancing our transportation system. However, additional strategies and projects are needed. The Strategic Plan identifies additional long-term initiatives such as zero emission transportation strategies; new operational improvements; expanded transit investments and high-speed rail system; as well as increased commitment to active transportation. Although elements of these strategies are included in the financially constrained plan, further work is needed to ensure there is regional consensus and commitment to fund the balance in subsequent RTPs.
Staff Report

Subject: Authorize a Regional Application for South Coast AQMD Emissions Reduction funding in Support of the Whitewater Parkway 1e11 Project and related programs

Contact: Tom Kirk, Executive Director (tkirk@cvag.org)

RECOMMENDATION: Executive Committee:
1) Authorize submittal of an application for grant funds from the South Coast Air Quality Management District for the AB 1318 Mitigation Fees Fund for Emissions Reduction Projects related to the CPV Sentinel Energy Project;
2) Authorize the Executive Director to complete all actions necessary to develop and submit this grant application; and
3) Request letters of support, commitment, or participation from member agencies, signed by the City Manager, or as required by the grant program.

BACKGROUND: Based on direction from the CVAG Executive Committee at their January 30 meeting, CVAG staff is actively developing proposals for various grants that are available for the Parkway 1e11 project for a neighborhood electric vehicle/bicycle/walking path along the Whitewater River corridor. The South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) is expected to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) in early 2012 for Emissions Reduction Projects under AB 1318 (the “Sentinel funds”), funded with $53 million in mitigation fees from the CPV Sentinel Energy Project power plant between the cities of Palm Springs and Desert Hot Springs. The Sentinel power plant is now under construction. Although the plant will have state of the art emissions control technology, it will produce PM10 emissions requiring the power plant, through AB 1318 (Perez), to pay a mitigation fee to the AQMD.

The schedule for the draft RFP shows that it is expected to be released on February 3, 2012 with a deadline of May 2, 2012. CVAG staff plans to attend the February 3rd AQMD Governing Board meeting where this item will be heard and more information will be available following that meeting. Pending release of the RFP, staff is requesting authorization to complete actions necessary to prepare this application for submittal, in anticipation of release of the RFP. Staff will work closely with our member agencies in this process. Letters of support are being solicited from member agencies and local, state and federal partners.

As described at the January 12 meeting, discussions continue between CVAG staff and the AQMD concerning the proposed Parkway project. The proposed Parkway will have many benefits in addition to emissions reduction. One significant benefit would be positioning our region to meet the requirements of the RTP/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) being developed by Southern California Association of Governments. The SCS will be discussed at the meeting under item 7C.

FISCAL ANALYSIS: If the grant application is successful, costs of implementing the grant would be covered by grant funding.