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To: ABAG Executive Board

From: Miriam Chion, Planning & Research Director

Subject: **Presentation on Grand Boulevard Initiative**

With the adoption of Plan Bay Area, regional agencies are focused on implementing the land use and transportation vision described in the Plan. Most of the housing and job growth in Plan Bay Area is projected to occur in the PDAs along the region's major transportation corridors, including El Camino Real, San Pablo Avenue, and International Boulevard/East 14th Street/Mission Boulevard. As a result, ABAG's implementation efforts will focus on addressing the obstacles to achieving PDA growth and investment along these corridors. The Grand Boulevard Initiative along the El Camino Real in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties provides a successful model for how to promote livable, walkable, and complete communities along a major transit corridor.

Finding common ground and creating collaborations to address planning and development issues and outreach to communities are key elements to the success of the Initiative. Grand Boulevard Initiative co-chair, Russell Hancock, CEO and President of Joint Venture Silicon Valley Network, will provide an overview of the Initiative and discuss two efforts central to moving the Initiative forward: the *Infrastructure Needs Assessment and Financing Strategy* and *Outreach and Engagement* (described in more detail below).

About the Grand Boulevard Initiative

Formed in 2006, the Grand Boulevard Initiative brings together for the first time all of the agencies that have responsibility for the condition, use, and performance of the Corridor, as well as representatives from development, labor, environmental, and health perspectives. Their shared vision is to transform the 43-mile El Camino Real Corridor (State Route 82) along the San Francisco Peninsula into a boulevard that connects walkable, people friendly communities.

Founding sponsors are the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans), the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), the City/County Association of Governments of San

Mateo County (C/CAG), Joint Venture Silicon Valley Network, and the San Mateo Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA).

This “coalition of the willing” includes 19 cities, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, two transit agencies, two Congestion Management Agencies, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), MTC, and ABAG. The Initiative is organized as a 46-member Task Force, a Working Committee of city and other government agency staff, and a Community Leaders Roundtable of community and advocacy organizations. Staffing is provided by SamTrans.

The essence of the Grand Boulevard Initiative approach is cooperation among local agencies and promoting bottom-up, collaborative, regional planning, while still allowing each jurisdiction to make decisions regarding the needs of its own community. This new paradigm for regional collaboration has achieved surprising success in the realms of policy development and planning to achieve sustainability, providing a template for retrofitting a suburban arterial street and corridor.

Grand Boulevard Initiative Achievements

The Grand Boulevard Initiative has achieved the following landmarks since its inception:

- Adoption of the Grand Boulevard Initiative Vision and 10 Guiding Principles, which have been endorsed by the members and incorporated into many of the plans along the Corridor.
- Securing \$8.7 million in discretionary grants and \$2.4 million in matching funds to support projects and plans in the Corridor.
- Implementation of a three-year public outreach program, featuring meetings in communities along the Corridor, field trips and outreach events for people who are interested, as well as research to better communicate and present the Initiative which will be implemented in 2014.
- Publication of Existing Conditions Reports in 2006 and 2011 to document the current state of the Corridor.
- Publication of Progress Reports in 2007 and 2013.
- Conducting Grand Boulevard Initiative Awards programs in 2007, 2009 and 2013 to recognize plans and projects that exemplify the Initiative’s Guiding Principles.
- Creation and maintenance of a Grand Boulevard Initiative Website (www.grandboulevard.net) which includes links to and a searchable database of local and regional plans and projects and a library with presentations, videos, and other documents.

Grand Boulevard Initiative Implementation Activities

The Grand Boulevard Initiative has undertaken a number of studies and projects to identify solutions to address the obstacles to achieving its vision of a more livable El Camino Real. These

include a *Multimodal Transportation Corridor Plan*, an *Economic and Housing Opportunities Assessment*, a *Complete Streets Program*, and an *Infrastructure Needs Assessment and Financing Strategy*. Since collaboration is a foundation of the Initiative's success, outreach and engagement activities have also been a focus of its work. The *Infrastructure Needs Assessment and Financing Strategy* and activities related to *Outreach and Engagement* are described in more detail below. More information about all of the Grand Boulevard Initiative's activities and recent changes along the Corridor can be found in the *2013 Progress Report* (available at www.grandboulevard.net).

Infrastructure Needs Assessment and Financing Strategy

Conducted as part of a \$1.1 million U.S. Department of Transportation TIGER II grant, this study evaluates the state of readiness of infrastructure in the Corridor to accommodate future development consistent with anticipated growth projections and local policies. Specifically, it identifies the costs of needed infrastructure improvements to accommodate planned growth, and provides funding and financing strategies to implement the improvements. It sets the stage for multi-jurisdictional infrastructure financing.

Outreach and Engagement

The Silicon Valley Community Foundation awarded Regional Planning grants in 2009, 2010 and 2011 to conduct community outreach and develop a communications plan and messaging platform. A recently awarded 2012 grant from the Community Foundation will empower elected and appointed officials, planners, and community leaders to engage in civic discourse with residents and the business community about how their communities can grow sustainably and will inform future efforts of the Initiative and local communities. This work is a partnership of Greenbelt Alliance, San Mateo County Health System, Santa Clara County Health Department, VTA, SamTrans, and, most recently, the Local Government Commission.