



**Date:** August 20, 2003  
**To:** Inter-Regional Partnership Members  
**From:** IRP Staff  
**RE:** IRP Program & Activities

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### **Background**

Over a year ago, the Inter-Regional Partnership (IRP) members discussed future program topics. The discussion took place in the context of the goals of the IRP, regionalism and inter-regional cooperation. Nick Bollman, President and CEO of the California Center for Regional Leadership and chair for the 2002 Speaker's Commission on Regionalism provided some introductory comments to stimulate the discussion.

Staff is reviewing the current work program and is seeking direction from the IRP about its role and goals in inter-regional cooperation. This review includes the tasks and/or activities that the IRP will undertake in the coming year, the final year of State funding for the IRP Pilot Program.

### **Discussion**

The Inter-Regional Partnership has been in existence for over 5 years now, with the first meeting taking place in May of 1998. Since that time, the IRP has evolved into a formal body that meets regularly. Although broad range of topics have been discussed and several key documents about inter-regional cooperation have been authored, considerable focus has been given over the last three years to the Pilot Project. The Pilot Project is now in its final year as a State funded program, and the IRP will be evaluating the success of the Jobs/Housing Opportunity Zones. It is anticipated that no further funding will be received from the State, and specific incentives for Zone implementation are non-existent.

Given the impending end to the Pilot Project funding (assuming SB639 does not pass – See Agenda Item IVB), the IRP is being asked to consider what programming the Committee would like to pursue in the coming years. Beyond identifying issues, the IRP is asked to consider what level of involvement, meetings and endeavors they would like to undertake. Some questions to consider during this discussion include:

1. Is the IRP interested in continuing to meet as a body?
2. If so, on which issues would the IRP like to focus?
3. How often will the IRP need to meet to focus on these issues?
4. Are there specific activities that the IRP would like to engage in?
5. Would other types of meetings be of value to the IRP (field visits, legislator visits)?
6. How would future activities be funded (beyond fiscal year 2004)?

## **Future Activities**

A number of activities have been identified by the IRP in prior meetings. The following headings list those topic areas and provide potential products or activities that the IRP might consider.

### ***Transportation***

Transportation issues are a founding interest of the IRP, with the two main transportation issues identified by the Partnership as being: 1) lengthy commutes created by the jobs/housing imbalance in the IRP region and 2) relieving increased congestion on the Altamont Pass and 580/680 corridors. Staff has identified several activities that the Partnership could take to address transportation issues in the IRP region.

1. Inter-Regional Transportation Study. The IRP could direct staff to prepare an Inter-Regional Transportation Study. The intent of the study would be to identify transportation projects of inter-regional significance and potential impacts on jurisdictions within the region. Regional transportation corridors could be identified and examined in terms of congestion, future capital improvements, current and projected regional commutes, regional and inter-regional transit, and land use impacts. Maps could also be created that depict existing regional transportation corridors; regional and inter-regional public transportation routes; projected VMT's; and regional and inter-regional planned capital improvements. The long-term goal would be to educate the IRP members about major transportation projects that may impact the region. Actions to take could include unified lobbying efforts for funding these inter-regional projects, lobby to change scoring criteria in competitive funding, i.e. STIP requirements for inter-regionally significant projects.
2. Inter-Regional Transportation/Land Use Study. The IRP could direct staff to identify key existing and potential multi-modal sites and other major public transportation nodes in the IRP region. The surrounding land uses could then be inventoried with recommendations for land use change to make these sites more supportive of public transit use. Actions to take could include efforts to encourage local jurisdictions to modify their General Plan and /or zoning, etc to allow for greater densities.

### ***Land Use***

Land use issues have been broached through many of the IRP's recent activities; in particular, as a key element of the Jobs/Housing Opportunity Zone selection process. In addition, IRP members have brought up the idea of developing an inter-regional land use plan.

In this context, land use patterns in the IRP Region could be examined by the IRP through a study of each jurisdiction's General Plans. A series of inter-regional recommendations for modifications to better improve jobs/housing balance and coordinated growth could be offered as a result of the study and IRP discussions. Below is a specific recommend action the IRP could take to address land use in the IRP region.

1. Inter-Regional Land Use Study. The existing and future land use pattern of the region could be established through a study. Discussions of density, zoning, transportation and land use linkages could be included. The IRP could create several land use related maps, including ones that depicted the existing "urban footprint" based on land use data; projected "urban footprint" based on general plan data; exiting land uses; and projected land uses.

### ***Housing***

The availability of affordable housing, the location of housing, density and access to alternative modes of transportation have all been discussed by the IRP in various forms. Below are recommendations to more directly deal with these issues.

1. Housing Plan. A report could be created that examines the relationship of housing to the availability of jobs commensurate with local housing costs. Maps could be created that depict the location of housing in the region; the location of affordable housing sites in the region; and the projected housing in the region.
2. Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The IRP could work with the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to better coordinate the RHNA process among the participating IRP COGs. Currently, each COG is on a different RHNA schedule, which makes coordinated housing planning difficult. The IRP could also work with HCD to ensure that jobs/housing balance issues are taken into account during the RHNA process.

### ***Economic Development***

Over the years, the IRP members expressed interest in developing an economic development plan for the IRP region. The opportunity for economic development is crucial to remedying the existing jobs/housing imbalance in the Inter-Regional Partnership region. The intent has been to promote economic development in the Central Valley and eastern Alameda and Contra Costa Counties as a tool for equalizing the jobs/housing imbalance in these areas.

1. Inter-Regional Economic Development Study. The IRP could work with the economic development groups involved with the IRP to develop priorities and to address and report on the feasibility of such a plan. This study could detail job growth in the region and its relationship to housing availability and affordability. Maps could be created that demonstrate the existing location of jobs; projected location of jobs; and regional and inter-regional planned major employment centers. This work could also begin to address the issue of job match that creates a relationship between income and available housing.

### ***Air Quality***

Air quality issues have been addressed by the IRP through presentations and letter writing to support particular legislation, i.e. Smog Check II. The IRP members may consider furthering their work in the area of air quality through the activities proposed below:

1. Merging Air Quality Districts. The IRP could actively participate in, or offer a forum for ongoing discussions of air quality issues between the Bay and Valley air districts.
2. Inter-Regional Air Quality Study. Regional air quality plans could be analyzed from an inter-regional perspective. Questions to address could include: what impacts does one region's air quality have on the other. Maps could be created that demonstrate inter-regional stationary sources, regional air basins, or other information of value to end-users.

### **Requested Action**

Staff requests that the IRP members discuss the suggestions, prioritize the issues, and direct staff to develop plans to address the issues of interest as the group determines its agenda for the next year.