REPORT

DATE: February 1, 2007

TO: Transportation and Communications Committee

FROM: Jon Edney, Chair Southwest Compact Task Force

SUBJECT: Formation, Membership and Functions of Southwest Alliance

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve the name, structure, action plan for the Southwest Alliance pursuant to Southwest Compact Task Force recommendation

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this report is to suggest a new name, framework and direction for the Southwest Compact Task Force that currently reports to the Transportation and Communications Committee (TCC). This framework and direction is needed at a time when our region, and the nation, is undergoing rapid economic, technological, geopolitical, demographic, and environmental changes. Our region's prospects are challenged by global competitors who have created long-range strategies for growth and competitiveness. Integrated investments in mobility, goods movement environment mitigation and economic development are needed to guide the region's growth in the 21st century.

The Southern California Association of Governments has positioned itself to be a leader in setting direction for the region. It is guided, in part, by a Strategic Plan. The plan was first adopted in 1990, updated in 2002 and further amended in 2004. The strategies contained in the plan are intended to direct SCAG in its continuing evolution as an effective regional organization in meeting future challenges. Two of the goals contained in the plan address regional leadership and inter-regional cooperation. The Strategic Plan instructs the Regional Council to maintain SCAG's position as the pre-eminent regional institution by providing leadership and creating consensus on a vision of the region's future. To that end, the plan says:

> The Regional Council, in collaboration with SCAG's partners, shall provide the leadership needed to develop through consensus a vision of Southern California's future. This process would involve identifying both short and long-term objectives for addressing the region's most pressing economic, social and environmental issues. As a part of this effort, SCAG should develop and foster a regional dialogue to further the formation of the consensus vision that is a critical component of the leadership process.

The strategic goals, moreover, provide that SCAG encourage and foster regional partnerships by enhancing interregional cooperation and collaboration. The goals state that the Regional Council should:

> Initiate and pursue efforts to reach agreements that underscore the need for regular meetings between the Regional Council and its neighboring regional governing boards and relevant state agencies. The purpose of the regular meetings would be to identify common issues and prepare joint strategies for addressing those issues. While the process may commence with an MOU and an informal structure, it is ultimately desirable to organize these activities through a formalized process, perhaps legislatively mandated, with support from the state.

In response to these strategic initiatives and direction of the Regional Council, SCAG has undertaken a successful outreach program to contiguous Councils of Government in Kern, San Diego and Santa Barbara Counties.

It has also, through the Southwest Compact Task Force, facilitated a process to engage a broader audience in the Southwest by holding a series of highly informative and well attended conferences in venues including El Centro, Yuma, Arizona and Mexicali, Mexico. The outcome of these meetings has resulted in an informal alliance that wishes to jointly study and present potential courses of action for the Southwest Region to maintain its viability in the global economy. Each venue the task force visited has specific issues and potential solutions to assist the southwest mega-region in meeting its various challenges. A meeting is planned in San Diego to obtain background and suggestions on trade, goods movement and border issues.

Other efforts undertaken by the Southwest Compact Task Force have included (1) identifying organizations and government entities that deal with cross border issues with Mexico and, (2) monitoring state and federal legislation that pertains to compact and border topics.

New Focus Needed for the Southwest Compact Task Force

The members of the Southwest Compact Task Force believe that, after the last two years of successful outreach and information gathering, it has reached the point when a report to the Regional Council, including recommendations for a course of action is needed. This report is appropriate because a task force by definition is meant to focus on a particular topic and to suggest a direction.

To facilitate its recommendations the task force held work sessions to consider a name, framework, potential geographic topical scopes, objectives, strategies and specific activities. The following are the recommendations of the Southwest Compact Task Force.

Name

Rename the Southwest Compact Task Force the Southwest Alliance

Organization

A Southwest Alliance of public and private sector entities in Southern California, Arizona and the Mexican states that are contiguous to the US/Mexican border with California and Arizona with participation defined by a memorandum of understanding.

Objectives

Initiate and promote a strong, cooperative relationship between elected and appointed officials, planning agencies and private sector organizations to create economic development, transportation and goods movement strategies for the Southwest Mega Region.

Consolidate information and achieve consensus on mega-region positions.

Develop an action plan that features a business model for successful public-private investment and collaboration in the creation of transportation and other needed infrastructure.

Guide Congress, the California Legislature and other affected state and federal bodies in facilitating legislation and obtaining funding.

Action Steps

- Prepare a White Paper containing the vision, mission, geographic scope, membership, organization strategies and action steps of the Southwest Alliance. Incorporate the strategies contained in the Compass Blueprint, Goods Movement Action Plan, and Regional Comprehensive Plan into the White Paper.

- Determine and solicit potential Alliance partners.

- Conduct a summit that brings together the various entities including key businesses, transportation agencies and other stakeholder commissions and associations to propose and formalize the Southwest Alliance mission, structure and work plan.

- Draft a memorandum of understanding and obtain signatories.

- Determine process and coordination role for the Southwest Alliance to interact with other public and private organizations that focus on cross border economic, infrastructure and transportation issues.

- Continue to review the activities, initiatives, and legislation of other organizations that focus on cross border economic, infrastructure and transportation issues.

- Determine appropriate funding opportunities and legislative measures to facilitate the creation of projects and adoption of initiatives of the Southwest Alliance.
- Develop a preliminary Southwest Alliance sub-site on the SCAG's web site.
- Continue to monitor the activities, initiatives and reports of other stakeholder commissions and coalitions operating within the mega-region.
- Schedule meetings of the Southwest Alliance to coincide with meetings of organizations with similar charters or focus.
- Prepare fact sheets, PowerPoint presentations and other information and outreach materials.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funding for the Southwest Alliance will be included in the FY07-08 budget and request for authorization submitted before the Regional Council. $30,000 will be requested to cover the activities and associated expenditures of the alliance in FY07-08.

It is proposed that staff resources for the Alliance initially be provided by SCAG staff from existing FY06-07 budgeted funds with reassessment of staffing needs to occur after the formation of the Alliance.

Reviewed by: _____
Division Manager

Reviewed by: _____
Department Director

Reviewed by: ACTING _____
Chief Financial Officer

Docs: dr130491