MEMO

DATE: December 9, 2004

TO: Community, Economic, and Human Development Committee

FROM: Bruce DeVine, Chief Economist 213-236-1903, e-mail: devine@scag.ca.gov

SUBJECT: Progress Report on the Subregional Economic Strategies Project

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SUMMARY:

The current OWP calls for development and implementation of an outreach plan for subregional economic strategies to enhance economic growth in the Inland Empire, Imperial County, and Gateway Cities. Staff has developed an Action Plan and begun work on a pilot project in Imperial County. This presentation details staff progress in implementing the Action Plan and outlines projects under consideration for the other two subregions.

BACKGROUND:

The initial phase of the Community Development Division's Subregional Economic Strategies project got under way a little over a year ago with a series of interviews conducted by staff with two different groups of people in each of the three subregions included in the project: Inland Empire (WRCOG, CVAG, and SANBAG), Gateway Cities (GWCCOG and Gateway Cities Partnership), and Imperial County (IVAG and County of Imperial). One group comprised the Subregional coordinators themselves; the other group was made up of economic development professionals in the subregion who had been recommended to us by the subregional coordinators. In all, 16 separate interviews were conducted in the three subregions.

The purpose of these meetings was two-fold: (1) to explain SCAG's goals in undertaking this project, and (2) to discuss ideas for economic development projects that would be of benefit to the subregion and which SCAG could be of assistance in implementing. Resources that SCAG could bring to bear would include staff's technical economic expertise, large centralized databases, resources such as GIS mapping and analysis, and statewide or nationwide networks of economic contacts developed over the years by SCAG.

Our proposal met with considerable interest in the three subregions, and several potential projects were identified. This information was brought back to Community Development Division and used to create an Action Plan for FY 04-05. Imperial County was chosen as the location for the initial pilot project. At the same time, work was nearing completion on a special resource handbook for Economic Analysis Section staff to present to each subregion. The title of the handbook is *Subregional Economic Strategies: a Guide to Sources of Information and Assistance Developed for the Inland Empire, Imperial County, and Gateway Cities Subregions*, and the set of materials contained in each book is unique to the particular subregion.

Progress to date under the Action Plan, links between this project and the Regional Comprehensive Plan update currently underway, and economic development projects under consideration for the other two subregions are the subjects of today's presentation to the Committee.

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FISCAL IMPACT:
Staff time in support of this project is covered by Work Element 05-055 (Regional Forecasting and Policy Analysis) in the current Overall Work Program. #105906
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