



ABAG



MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Prosperity Plan Steering Committee DATE: November 7, 2014

FR: Vikrant Sood, Program Manager W.I.: 1611

RE: Recommendation for Award – Service Sector Worker Transportation Needs Assessment Study (\$37,500)

Background

The Regional Prosperity Plan has identified jobs-housing mismatch as a major challenge for many low- and moderate-wage workers in the region. As a strengthening regional economy continues to add new jobs in the Bay Area, an already tight housing market is increasingly failing to meet the needs of a significant proportion of residents in the region, especially low-wage workers. Many low-wage workers in the region are unable to find or afford housing close to where they work¹, leading to longer commutes. And since many of the low-wage jobs are not accessible by transit, for example in Silicon Valley, low-wage workers often struggle to find an affordable and direct transportation connection that meets their needs².

Purpose of Study

Current research and analysis does not fully explain the travel patterns of, or transportation challenges faced by low-wage workers in the region who commute to low-wage jobs in locations that may be inaccessible by high-quality and affordable transit service. There is also limited understanding about how housing needs are weighted by low-wage workers with their transportation needs. The proposed study will survey almost 400 janitorial workers who commute to their jobs in Silicon Valley and document their commute patterns, challenges they face, and potential needs. Research questions will address issues such as travel modes, cost and time; availability of affordable housing close to place of work; place of residence (zip code); and access to better paying jobs close to place of residence.

Results from this research will provide useful data and insights about travel choices and needs of low-wage workers to local jurisdictions, community groups and regional agencies.

¹ Projects funded through the Regional Prosperity Plan's sub-grant programs have highlighted the risks as well as a growing trend towards displacement of low-income residents that are located close to high-growth areas, as they continue to compete with high-wage workers for a limited supply of market-rate housing (which is becoming increasingly unaffordable even to middle-wage workers). At the same time, primarily due to limited public resources, the production of new affordable housing units has not kept pace with growing needs of low-income residents.

² Economic Prosperity Strategy, October 2014, Bay Area Regional Prosperity Plan Project

It is anticipated that the research will be coordinated with the University of California Berkeley and conducted between December 2014 and March 2015. Results will be presented to the Steering Committee in March and May 2015 for discussion. The study will also develop recommendations for addressing concerns identified through the surveys.

Selection Process

In Spring 2014, the Equity Collaborative, on behalf of the Regional Prosperity Plan Consortium, solicited proposals from consortium members on high-priority research projects that could fill information gaps with the goal of expanding current understanding of key challenges faced by disadvantaged communities in the Bay Area.

Any consortium member was eligible to propose a research project. The Equity Collaborative received a number of proposals that were reviewed by the entire working group between Spring and Fall 2014. Of these proposals, the working group recommended funding the Service Sector Worker Transportation Needs Assessment Study to the Joint Projects Team (JPT) in September 2014.

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria used by the working group to review potential projects included: proposed research can deliver useful data and information that is relevant to the work of community organizations as well as local and regional agencies; proposed research can be completed by March 2015 with limited oversight from the JPT; proposed research directly addresses key challenges faced by disadvantaged communities in the region; and proposed methodology and approach is realistic and feasible.

Recommendation

The JPT recommends awarding a sub-grant for \$37,500 to Peninsula Interfaith Action / San Francisco Organizing Project to conduct the Service Sector Worker Transportation Needs Assessment Study in coordination with UC Berkeley. The project must be completed by March 2015.