

Agenda Report

December 14, 2020

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Assistant City Manager
SUBJECT: Membership in the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council consider reinstating membership in the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) and

1. Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (common sense exemption); and
2. Authorize the Mayor to sign the Fourth Amended and Restated Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement for the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Pasadena has a long history as a member of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) and benefits in numerous ways from that participation. The COG serves as a unified voice representing the cities in the San Gabriel Valley on County, regional and statewide level. Priority areas in the past have included:

- Large Capital Transportation Projects
- Active Transportation (e.g. Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements)
- Stormwater
- Homelessness
- Legislative Advocacy

In March, 1994 the City of Pasadena officially joined the SGVCOG through a City Council approved Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). Then Councilmember Bill Crowfoot served as the City's first appointed governing Board Member. The original purpose of the SGVCOG was to provide a vehicle for the Members to engage in regional and cooperative planning and coordination of government services. Today, the SGVCOG is

a JPA made up of representatives from 31 cities within the San Gabriel Valley as well as the three Los Angeles County Supervisorial Districts and the three Municipal Water Districts located in the San Gabriel Valley. Currently, the primary concerns of the SGVCOG include seeking regional ways to address transportation, housing, economic development, the environment, and water.

In March 2018 the City formally withdrew from the SGVCOG because it was going in a different direction regarding the SR 710 Freeway and the transition of the ACE into the COG. Simultaneously the Arroyo Verdugo Steering Committee was transitioning into a JPA with the thought that it would one day become its own COG. However with the recent adoption of the strategic plan, the Arroyo Verdugo Communities Joint Powers Authority (AVCJPA) decided that now is not the time to make this transition.

Some of the benefits of COG membership include:

- Positive messaging by supporting our regional cities as we speak with a unified voice for the San Gabriel Valley
- Networking on issues that all of the San Gabriel cities face
- Modest cost for participating
- Access to timely information on grant opportunities and grant writing
- Learning how other municipalities address regional challenges and mandates
- Provides legislative involvement and/or advocacy
- Provides opportunities to partner with neighboring cities on regional issues

There are some other key areas that the City would benefit from membership in the SGVCOG. They are as follows;

Transportation:

- Allowance for greater representation at the County-wide and regional level, including having greater representation at the Metro Board level.
- Facilitate the ability for the City to request transportation studies and or funding to support studies of regional significance. Example: Understanding the impact of VMT and VT reduction to Green House Gas Emissions.
- Facilitate enhanced coordination on projects of regional significance. Examples: implementation of Integrated Corridor Management along the I-210 freeway and the implementation of transportation data sharing across local jurisdictional boundaries.
- Facilitate partnering on Open Street events.
- Facilitate the City's participation in regional micro-mobility efforts.

Homelessness and Housing:

- Pasadena's participation in the SGVCOG's Homeless Committee helps to facilitate regional solutions and capacity building.

- As a member of the SGVCOG Pasadena could elect to participate in the SGV Housing Trust fund to access state funds awarded to the SGVCOG for affordable housing.

Planning:

- Participation in the Planning Directors' Technical Advisory Committee which provides input on work programs, budgets, priorities, policies, programs, and practices related to planning and community development matters in the San Gabriel Valley.
- Provide opportunity to interact with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) on policy matters related to long range planning and transportation issues in the region

Public Works including Stormwater:

- Participation in multi-jurisdictional collaboration and partnership given their regional impacts, for stormwater does not recognize jurisdictional boundaries.
 - Compliance with the City's MS4 permit mandates, per NPDES Clean Water Act
- Implementation of the Upper LA River Watershed Management Plan, including its Arroyo Seco and Rio Hondo tributaries
- CIP projects crossing multiple jurisdictions with region-wide benefits in SGV; e.g. Freeway soundwalls along 210 Corridor, administered by Caltrans.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

Approval of the subject recommendation represents opportunity to partner with surrounding cities on priorities such as transportation, housing, homelessness and stormwater which are all supported by the City of Pasadena.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The action proposed herein is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to state CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) the "common sense exemption" that CEQA applies only to projects which may have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. That is the case here where the only action under consideration is membership in a professional organization.


FISCAL IMPACT:

In rejoining the SGVCOG, the joint powers agreement requires a city is required to pay in full all back membership dues from the time it withdrew to the time of rejoining. The SGVCOG has calculated this amount as follows:

Outstanding Past Dues (17-18)	\$16,421.34
Membership Dues (18-19)	\$33,992.20
Membership Dues (19-20)	\$35,079.96
Membership Dues (20-21)	\$36,167.44
TOTAL	\$121,660.94

If the City Council were to authorize the City rejoining the SGVCOG, staff would return on a future budget "clean up" agenda report to approve the appropriation and future operating budgets will be increased to include the annual membership dues.

Respectfully submitted,


JULIE A. GUTIERREZ
Assistant City Manger

Approved by:


STEVE MERMELL
City Manager