



## Shared Services & New Initiatives: Information Technology and Web Support

**DESCRIPTION** This concept would offer a range of Information Technology (IT) and web support services to participating local governments and special districts or public agencies. Services could either be delivered for fee or through sharing agreements. Services may include:

- web page design
- database design
- network support
- data sharing
- other IT and web services

**ORIGIN OF THE IDEA** In the fall 2012 member services survey, many agencies ranked this as a medium or high interest area, and also an area where there is little current activity. In recent conversations with smaller local governments, SACOG staff heard interest in unique web-based data services or data pages that could be incorporated into local government web sites. Two inter-jurisdictional information maintenance programs use a collaborative model successfully in Sacramento and Yolo counties. SACOG also previously developed web sites for two transit agencies.

**CONCEPT** This service concept could provide two types of support:

*Supportive Web Content* — New demographic database information available to provide content through a data service that can support web pages designed by either local agency or SACOG staff, coordination assistance to share best practices among local agencies, demographic data feeds or other shared content, and regional transportation land use information.

*Website development and IT assistance* — New centralized support center responding to requests for assistance including: development of websites and web tools, potentially web surveys, engagement and public information sites, and database driven educational materials. Potential services include interactive place based public opinion surveys, an under-street infrastructure maintenance coordination tool, centralized procurement websites, or regionally supported transportation or land-use databases.

**GEOGRAPHY/SCALABILITY** No need for proximity between participating agencies; can scale to serve all willing participants.

### SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS<sup>1</sup>

- *Cooperatively purchase private contractor services* — SACOG's experience in shared contractor relationship with the Transportation Management Associations represents a cost effective way to provide highly skilled consultant team support for interactive, uniquely programmed functions, for high traffic websites. This option would be

best suited to a number of jurisdictions wanting a shared website for a specific initiative or activity.

- *Sole public contract provider (SACOG or other entity)* — This option would be best suited if local governments desire dedicated support in a shared staff position (or positions). The dedicated support would be employed by SACOG or another public agency, and local governments would contract for a base amount of service, with the option to add more support as needed.
- *Agency fee-for-service (one or more agencies provide specialized services to others)* — Similar to the previous option without a dedicated position. Agencies could agree to provide specific services on an hourly basis, this option could create local agency bid option on IT tasks.
- *Agency trade (one agency trades a service with another agency for services of a similar value)* — Local governments and public agency staff could arrange trades on IT or web support for other services. SACOG's experience is that this would be particularly useful in collaboration on shared interest projects/activities by example public engagement or data collection.

### POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Cost savings in contract costs for web and IT support.
- Greater access to information by agency staff and residents to improve public information and public engagement.
- Improved web access to agency-specific demographic information, which could help with grant applications.
- Improved data sharing for longer-term benefits to land use monitoring, forecasting, housing elements, modeling, and other planning activities.

### POTENTIAL RISKS

- Interdependency for multiple local government web sites and public information. Security measures for servers and systems would need to be part of discussion with IT and web programmers from local governments in working group.
- Possible delayed response time without dedicated local staffing for each individual local agency. Agreement would need to include accountability measures for support requests and response. If sufficient demand over time, documenting requests and time for service, might substantiate need for additional staff resources within this partnership relationship.

### FINANCIAL

*Potential savings* — Largely attributable to savings in contract costs if cheaper cooperative purchases are available. Savings could range from reduced staff costs for resource sharing or cost-share positions to full contract replacement.

*Potential costs* — Service cost is primarily for high-skill, high-wage labor estimated to cost between \$70 to \$200/hr. Potential benefit to

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see separate paper on Governance and Service Delivery Options



purchase the region's best local agency skills by the hour rather than by FTE. Costs are highly elastic, based on services used. Minimal costs for coordination/facilitation could be covered through a new regional program

**INTERESTED PARTIES** Jurisdictional executives, staff and elected officials; IT and web vendors and consultants

**ISSUES TO RESOLVE**

- Interest in specific services from member agency staff.
- Opportunities for data service sharing.
- Most cost effective and reliable hosting locations.
- Structure for identifying talent and needs.
- Cost-sharing structure.
- Differentiating between one-time/ongoing service needs and identify level of support needs.

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