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## MEMORANDUM

To: **Tony Boren**  
Executive Director

Date: June 30, 2010

Subject: **Status report for June 2010**

The intent of the present document is to provide you with a **Status Report** regarding SRI's activities, to date, during the month of June 2010. I'm presently involved in two major projects for Fresno COG; Farmland Conservation and Transit Consolidation; plus, several projects for the smaller cities who are members of the COG. We anticipate beginning a third, major project, on behalf of the Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley within the next month. I'll speak to each of these below.

### **Farmland Conservation:**

Through the Exploratory Phase of the project, we have identified and a model that appears to have merit.

To date, we've completed thirty four (34) face-to-face interviews regarding **Farmland Conservation**; each of the interviewees have referred us to several additional individuals; of course, some interviewees have chosen NOT to refer anyone. Thus, we have a list of another 49 individuals to whom we have been referred.

We've moved from the **EXPLORATORY** stage into the **CONFIRMATION** stage in the process. We have "test" this model on individuals who we are being referred to both inside and outside the Ag Industry (e.g., those in the Ag Industry, developers, local government officials, the business community, among others).

The wisdom of the approach being administered is perhaps best seen in the fact that, based upon input from those whom we have interviewed since moving into the **CONFIRMATORY** stage of the present study, we've been able to enhance the initial model brought forward in a paper entitled: ***A Landscape of Choice***, prepared by The Growth Alternatives Alliance and released in 1998, and a second paper entitled: ***Model Farmland Conservation Program for Fresno County***, commissioned by the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley and produced by the American Farmland Trust (released in December 2008).

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Our efforts, to date, have led to several definitive conclusions.

1. It's clear that we need to return to the initial publication: **A Landscape of Choice**; a concept that was embraced by County officials and the elected officials of all 15 cities in the County, as well as a host of other agencies and organization in BOTH the public and private sectors (including the Fresno County Farm Bureau).
2. We need to incorporate several of the elements brought forward in the work conducted in preparation for the most recent paper, entitled: **Model Farmland Conservaton Program for Fresno County**; a great deal of work was invested in this effort and it's imperative to take full advantage of the elements that were designed to enhance the work brought forward in "A Landscape of Choice."
3. Whatever dynamics are adopted for a Model to ensure Farmland Conservation in Fresno County, and beyond, they MUST be consistent with the goals, objectives, and expectations inherent to the **San Joaquin Valley Blue Print**.
4. Finally, serious consideration needs to be given to the conclusions and recommendations that are coming out of the present effort, wherein, we're securing input from many (if not most) of the **INFLUENTIALS** within the Agriculture Industry. These influentials are perhaps best thought of as falling into one of two classifications: (i) Agri-business (the larger corporations/organizations/family businesses) and (ii) Fresno County's Farming community (the smaller farming organizations and smaller family businesses).

There is one additional stage to the Confirmatory stage that needs to be administered; this involves designing and administering a BENCHMARK survey of registered voters in Fresno County (much like the BENCHMARK survey conducted for Measure C), and perhaps the community-at-large. Once we have this "intelligence" in hand, we will be prepared to make a recommendation of what amounts to 'Go or NO-Go'. At that time, we will be presenting the *findings* from this concerted effort in detail.

### **Transit Consolidation in Fresno County:**

Measurable progress has been made with respect to **Transit Consolidation** in Fresno County over the past couple of months. To date, the following has been accomplished:

- A Feasibility Study was completed to determine whether or not it was worth moving forward with a **Transit Consolidation Plan**, wherein an attempt is made to create a seamless regional transit system to make it possible for people to traverse (navigate) from any point in the County to any destination in the County with minimal inconvenience and at a reasonable cost. Beyond providing seamless transportation, the intent is to minimize and/or eliminate the duplication of services among agencies; thus, maximizing the ROI (*return on investment*) of tax dollars earmarked for public transportation. Indeed, creating a regional transit system is a center piece of the **Blue Print** effort, which is being designed to enhance mass transit throughout

the Central Valley and beyond. A copy of the Final Report is available to anyone who would like to have it. The conclusion from this study was that Transit Consolidation was, indeed, worth pursuing.

- A comprehensive **Work Plan** was developed and approved by Fresno COG staff and, subsequently, by the Fresno COG Policy Board.
- A highly qualified public transit/transportation Consultant, with substantial experience in preparing comprehensive transit operations analysis, developing transit operating plans, and forming regional transit agencies, has been retained; this is Nelson\Nygaard Consulting (represented by Paul Jewel), headquartered in San Francisco, CA.

The purpose of the **Fresno County Regional Transit Consolidation Plan** is to systematically evaluate potential transit consolidation models, evaluate potential Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWAT), and determine the best approach to pursuing a single regional transit agency for Fresno County. The RFP was sent out and proposals are due later this month.

The next step is to form an **Exploratory Committee**; we are in the process of doing this at the present time.

Due to the technical complexities inherent to the very notion of transit consolidation, this committee will be comprised solely of professional staff (e.g., heads of the respective public transit agencies, transportation planners, and the like). Once the technical details have been addressed, and selected politically-charged elements, which are essential to moving forward from a logistical perspective, the Committee will be expanded (and renamed) to include such stakeholders elected representatives of local government, members of various community and special interests groups/organizations, among others...in order to move Transit Consolidation in Fresno County to the next level.

### **Serving the smaller Cities, who are members of Fresno COG:**

SRI has, to date, worked with the City of Mendota in helping them create their own City Police Department. We've assisted the City of Huron with handling media relations pertaining to the hiring of a new Police Chief; in the process, we created new press release stationery for the City to use, going forward. We are presently facilitating a series of Workshops for the City of Reedley. Some of these professional services have been provided at highly reduced fees; others have been provided on a pro bono basis. We will continue to assist members of Fresno COG in a variety of ways that bring to the members professional services that would otherwise not be feasible.

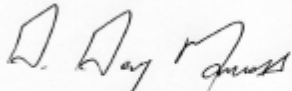
### **California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley:**

SRI is anticipating working with **The Partnership**, under the direction of Mike Dozier, Executive Director, to assist the organization in realizing specific goals, objectives, and

expectations that are consistent with the professional expertise and resources that our Institute brings to the proverbial table. We anticipate beginning our first project within the month.

Of course, there are other projects (e.g., bringing the High-speed Rail Maintenance Yard to Fresno) that SRI will be asked to work on. However, the above projects are those that are on the front burner at the moment. If you have any questions and/or comments you would like to share, please know that I'm telephone close and I monitor my e-mails quite closely.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Day".

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