



September 10, 2008

For Immediate Release

Valley Springs. During public comments at the September 9 Board of Supervisors meeting, Tim McSorley, Executive Director, Calaveras Council of Governments, announced that the application for a Caltrans Community-Based Transportation Planning Grant for Valley Springs has been successful. Calaveras COG is the designated planning and administrative agency for transportation projects and programs in the County.

The grant project is titled, "Rural Smart Growth: A Community-Based Plan for Valley Springs". The grant award from Caltrans is \$204, 648 with a match from COG of \$51,162 for a total of \$255,810. Funding is contingent on approval of the state budget and is not anticipated prior to January 2009. The grant is intended to produce a community planning document consistent with the Calaveras County General Plan and the California Environmental Quality Act. Project partners include COG, the Calaveras County Community Development Agency, the Local Government Commission, MyValleySprings.com, and an as yet to be determined group representing local landowners.

The Local Government Commission (LGC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership organization that provides inspiration, technical assistance, and networking to local elected officials and other dedicated community leaders who are working to create healthy, walkable, and resource-efficient communities. MyValleySprings.com is a local non-profit organization devoted to responsible growth and development based on broad public participation.

The heart of the proposed community planning effort is a highly participatory public design charrette process. A charrette is a concentrated series of meetings, workshops and design sessions in which a professional design team works with the public onsite to produce a collaborative plan. An inclusive advisory group of agencies and community stakeholders will be convened in advance of the charrette to build common understanding of the project from different perspectives, to scope out core issues and key players, help plan the events, and provide guidance to maximize community participation and involve under-served groups. Partnership and public participation are embedded in every step of the process.

The grant was written by MyValleySprings.com and the Local Government Commission. Muriel Zeller, MVS.com grant writer, said, "MyValleySprings.com has been working hard for a couple of years now to facilitate the development of an updated Valley Springs Community Plan. One of the biggest obstacles has been money. Now that obstacle has been removed, and it is our sincere hope to work productively and collectively with representative stakeholders from all areas of the community. Thirty years is a long time to wait for a new community plan, but the time is here."