

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**  
**THIRD QUARTER FY 03-04 PROGRESS REPORT**  
*January to March 2004*

**101 Work Program and Budget**

During this quarter, the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee and Commission approved the FY04-05 Budget and Work Program, amended the FY03-04 budget; renegotiated, accepted the fiscal year audit, and contracted preparation of the Triennial Performance Audit. The Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee met three times during this quarter and initiated amendment to the Rules and Regulations and exploration of potential revenue enhancement strategies.

**General Administration**

This was the first quarter of operation for the Commission's new in-house Local Area Network. Overall, the new system is functioning very smoothly with help desk, technical support and network maintenance now provided by the local consultancy firm, BizFu.

Staff and two Commissioners from the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee met with County administrative staff about generating a new Memorandum of Understanding regarding the administrative relationship between the County and the SCCRTC.

**112 Plan Coordination**

During this quarter, staff attended regular meetings of the California Transportation Commission, the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) Group, the California Association of Councils of Government (CALCOG), the Caltrans Regional Coordination Group, the SCMTD Board of Directors meetings, the local Planning Directors Roundtable, and the regional agency directors.

The draft 2004 Legislative Agenda was presented to each of the RTC committees for review and comment. Based on comments received, a revised 2004 Legislative Agenda was reviewed and approved by the RTC in February 2004. Staff is monitoring legislative developments, but limited staff resources are restricting proactive engagement in legislative affairs.

The Executive Director, with staff assistance, continued to participate as a member of the local technical advisory committees and task forces. She met with the staff of federal legislators regarding federal earmark requests. She continued annual individual meetings with Commissioners.

**113 Public Information**

Staff completed work on a system that allows interested people to sign-up (via the RTC

website) for email updates on a variety of Commission projects/programs. This E-News program is now in place for updates on both the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project and the Rail Line Acquisition Project.

The SCCRTC provided the media, local jurisdictions and chambers of commerce press releases about local impacts of state budget proposals, Paratransit Coordination Public Hearing, Transportation Enhancement funding, rideshare opportunities, recreational rail environmental analysis, and the prioritization of transportation projects for funding. In addition, the RTC continued to provide information/highlights from the monthly meetings about Commission actions.

Improved organization, updates and maintenance to the current website continued. These included: posting current Commission and Committee packets, minutes and highlights, press releases, meeting schedules and reports and providing links to websites of transportation partners such as Caltrans. Work resumed on developing the content for the Commission's redesigned website. A change in project consultant may occur in the next quarter.

#### **177 Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE)/Call Boxes**

SCCRTC staff continued to perform periodic inspections and worked with the Commission's call box service providers, including Comarco Wireless Technologies, to maintain the system. Staff worked with AT&T Wireless, which acquired Cellular One, to ensure that cellular service is charged according to the existing contract with Cellular One. Staff attended CalSAFE meetings.

Staff prepared and submitted to the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee and the Commission an operational and financial report of the various SAFE programs and projects. The RTC approved privatizing call box answering services through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) private call answering center. Staff continues to work with the CHP and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) on the implementation of the Safe on 17 program's extra CHP enforcement. SCCRTC and MTC staff participated on ride-alongs with the CHP on one of the CHP's special enforcement days.

Working with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Caltrans and the CHP, staff reviewed proposals for a new FSP towing contract on the Highway 17.

#### **179 Transportation Demand Management - Commuter Services**

Staff concluded the Don't Drive One in Five campaign's extensive promotion schedule. Riester-Robb, the Commission's advertising contractor, presented a final evaluation to the Commission. The evaluation focused on a comprehensive tally of activities to date, including a summary of a public opinion poll conducted to measure impact and effectiveness of the campaign. Although poll results were highly favorable, staff ceased further outreach efforts due to the RTC's direction to put campaign continuation on hold

until the May, 2004 meeting when CMAQ funded projects would be evaluated and continued funding would be discussed.

Commission staff continued promoting and administering the second phase of the Vanpool Incentive Program (VIP) through print ads, employer outreach, as well as distribution of updated informational brochures. Commission staff continued working with the SCATMA staff on the provision of an Emergency Ride Home program to participating vanpoolers.

Through employer contacts, the website, 429-POOL phone line, and follow up contacts, Commute Solutions continued to produce match lists and provide follow up services and referrals. Staff continued its collaboration with RIDES for Bay Area Commuters for instant on-line ride matching system access and support. Staff provided assistance to the various entities in their promotion of sustainable transportation modes and coordinated with area agencies and employers.

Park and Ride Lot program administration continued as did ex-officio service on the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association.

#### **231 Transportation Monitoring and Evaluation**

Staff completed the annual *2003 Traffic Monitoring Report (TMR)* including an update of traffic data gathered throughout the year at various locations throughout the county. The TMR has been posted on the RTC's website for easy access. The spreadsheet showing current and historic data of traffic counts throughout the county will be updated on a monthly basis beginning in April 2004.

Through the period, staff collected traffic data at over 20 locations, including regular locations monitored on an ongoing basis and special requests from local agencies. Staff completed work on a multi-year monitoring program to standardize the traffic monitoring program with input from the Interagency Transportation Advisory Committee (ITAC) and consideration of screen line locations used by AMBAG for the regional travel model. Staff also responded to requests for information from local agencies, business and service agencies.

#### **411 Land Use/Transportation Coordination**

Staff reviewed and commented on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the UCSC Marine Science Campus Coastal Long Range Development Plan (CLRDP). The Executive Director participated in the bi-monthly Planning Director's Roundtable Luncheon. Staff continued to monitor and review draft environmental documents for projects with potential transportation impacts.

#### **614 Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Program**

The Bicycle Committee met three times in this quarter. Staff attended monthly meetings

of the Community Traffic Safety Coalition, coordinating with this group on issues relating to bicycle and pedestrian safety throughout the county. Staff continued to coordinate with the Electric Bicycle Program. Staff coordinated with Bike to Work day staff for the spring events. Staff communicated with public works department staff at the various local jurisdictions regarding bicycle hazard report forms submitted by members of the public. Staff distributed bike racks through the Bikes Secure Program..

**621 Specialized Transportation**

During this quarter, the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E/D TAC) met three times. Discussion focused on the ADA Paratransit, specialized transportation coordination public hearing, committee amendments to the SCCRTC rules and regulations, availability of taxis for regular fare service, Section 5310 local review committee, unmet needs, member/alternate positions, Transportation Enhancement fund recommendations and the Paratransit Work Plan. Also included were reports from the service providers.

**622 Regional Transportation Plan**

SCCRTC staff continued to participate in meetings with staff from AMBAG, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and San Benito COG on coordination of the next updates of the county Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) and AMBAG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Staff worked with project sponsors to update the draft project lists for the new plan. The Commission's Committees reviewed the project lists. Staff also continued to work on coordinating environmental review and the financial element of the plans.

**631 Transportation System Management**

Staff participated in a Central Coast Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Committee meeting. Staff arranged a meeting of the Traffic Operations System (TOS) Oversight Committee and continued to coordinate with Caltrans and the CHP on enhancements to the existing traffic information system. The TOS Oversight Committee discussed further a major incident on Highway 17 and suggestions for improvement. Caltrans completed the installation of a dynamic curve warning sign and video camera on Highway 17 southbound before Glenwood Drive.

**641 Transportation Improvement Program**

The Commission conducted a competitive process to program the region's federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds. Staff reviewed and scored the TE applications received, Commission Committees and staff made programming recommendations. Staff also developed a proposal for how to respread the region's programmed State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds for the 2004 STIP and produced the

*2004 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).* Staff also worked with the Caltrans and County Public Works on a proposal to deliver the El Rancho Drive/Highway 17 stabilization project.

Staff attended monthly meetings of the California Transportation Commission, the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies Group, and the Self Help Counties Coalition that centered on the impacts of the state budget deficit on STIP and SHOPP projects and development of the 2004 STIP. Staff continued to work with project sponsors to secure funding for local projects, as possible.

Staff continued to monitor progress with reauthorization and extensions of TEA-21.

Staff participated in regular teleconferences with the Caltrans local transit project delivery task force, met with Caltrans District 5 staff for a Quarterly Coordination meeting, and met with District 5, Caltrans Headquarters and local agency representatives regarding ongoing projects, including the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Project, the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project, the Highway 17 TOS project, the Highway 17 roadway rehabilitation project and the Highway 1/Salinas Road Interchange. Staff updated the database of projects funded by the SCCRTC. The Interagency Technical Advisory Committee met three times this quarter.

## **682 Rail/Trail Authority**

Public Affairs Management (PAM) and staff reviewed the comments on the initial study for the environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed recreational rail service between Capitola and Aptos with an extension to Seascapes. A plan for addressing the comments in the EIR or outside of the EIR were presented to Commission. The consultants completed the studies and began work on a draft EIR. The Commission discussed the initial study comments and the draft EIR at various meetings culminating in a very well attended evening public hearing to discuss whether to complete the EIR and continue with plans to use Proposition 116 funds to purchase the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. The Commission decided to complete the EIR and proceed with plans to purchase the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line using Proposition 116 funds.

The appraisal consultants proceeded with their work to produce the various appraisals of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line required by Caltrans. Geomatrix Consultants produced a work plan for the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. The workplan was reviewed by staff and submitted to the County Environmental Health Department for approval.

The RTC continued to negotiate with Union Pacific through its negotiator, Kirk Trost of Miller Owen and Trost, and the RTC was informed of progress in closed sessions. Systra Consulting, a subconsultant of Miller, Owen and Trost, began preparing a draft business plan for ownership of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. The Commission approved adding Proposition 116 funds to the Miller, Owen and Trost contract to pay the subconsultants producing the business plan, the title review and the structures assessment.

**683**     **Highway 1 Widening- Project Approval/Environmental Document (PA/ED)**  
**684**

The consultant team is now fully engaged in all aspects of the project. Aerial topographic mapping was completed and work submitted to Caltrans establishing survey monuments and centerline control for engineering studies. Site specific foot surveys are being conducted to complete the corridor level analysis for Architectural Historical Significance and Archaeology, the longest lead time item in the project schedule. Purpose and Need statements were introduced and discussed by the Project Development Team (PDT) and approved by the RTC. The Notice of Preparation (NOP) was prepared and approved by the PDT, SCCRTC and Caltrans for distribution to local, regional, state and federal agencies. The 30 day commit period coincides with the scheduled Resource Agency meeting and Public Informational Meetings to be held in April.

An administrative draft Supplemental Project Study Report (PSR) for the southern segment, not previously covered in the approved PSR was submitted for comment. As part of this work program the consultant submitted preliminary cost estimates and geometric drawings of the full standard design alternative for the southern segment.

A Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the PA/ED phase of the project was approved by the PDT, Caltrans and the SCCRTC. A Public Outreach Plan and budget were developed and planning commenced for Public Information meetings to be held in early April.

Three Project Development Team (PDT) meetings were held during this quarter. Staff presented updates on the project to the RTC at every RTC and Transportation Policy Workshop meeting, and at the Highway 1 Construction Authority.

The Commission continued to monitor its federal earmark request for later phases of the project.

**683**     **Highway 1 Planning**

**Expenditure Plan Development**

The Expenditure Plan Subcommittee continued to meet monthly to discuss the proposed November 2004 1/2 cent sales tax measure for transportation. The Subcommittee reviewed cross tabs from a countywide poll of likely voters, reviewed information from a private sector poll, discussed methods to include additional groups in development of a project list to put on the ballot and reviewed a draft Expenditure Plan and Ordinance.

**JPA Formation**

A joint exercise of powers agreement was executed by the Cities of Capitola, Scotts Valley and Watsonville, the County of Santa Cruz, and the Santa Cruz County Metropolitan Transit District, creating the Highway 1 Construction Authority. The HCA Board of Directors met for the first time in February 2004, and approved officers, by-laws, and a budget for the remaining period in Fiscal Year 2003-2004. The County

Administrative and Public Works Agency staff were designated as interim staff to the HCA.

The HCA approved a Request for Proposals (RFP) released in late March to secure an Administrator and necessary staffing to assume responsibility for the PA/ED phase of the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project. RTC and County staff met several times through the quarter to develop and implement a Transition Plan to establish the necessary agreements and transfer funding and project authority for the PA/ED phase from the SCCRTC to the HCA

#### Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

Staff met with Caltrans and staff from local jurisdictions for one Project Development Team meeting this quarter discussing: the effect of the lack of state funding on the project schedule, and whether to break out the sound walls as a separate project to maintain project momentum. Staff and Caltrans continued to keep the RTC informed of developments.

### **Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association**

#### **631 TMA Outreach Services Program**

The progress report is being submitted with the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Transportation Systems Management quarterly invoice.

### **LOCAL JURISDICTION PLANNING PROJECTS FUNDED BY FEDERAL CMAQ/STP AND STATE TSM FUNDS**

The progress reports are attached to the invoices.

### **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (STP) EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

Staff made payments to projects previously approved to receive RSTP Exchange funds and continued to monitor projects receiving those funds.

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