

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FOURTH QUARTER FY 03-04 PROGRESS REPORT
April to June 2004

101 Work Program and Budget

During this quarter, the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee and Commission approved an amendment to the FY04-05 Budget and Work Program and accepted the Triennial Performance Audit.

General Administration

Work on updating of the Commission's Rules and Regulations and a potential new Memorandum of Understanding regarding the administrative relationship between the County and the SCCRTC were put on hold due to other high priority projects.

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.

While limited staff resources have restricting proactive engagement in legislative affairs, staff did provide a 2004 Legislative Status Report to the Commission in mid-June. The report highlighted Federal and State Transportation budgetary issues, with reports from RTC's Washington D.C. and Sacramento assistants, respectively. The report also discussed other select legislative items, including: CALCOG's Regional Authority for Investment in Transportation proposal, hybrid vehicles in car-pool lanes, high-speed rail bond act, and safe routes to school. Staff has actively worked with Senator McPherson's staff and provided testimony on SB 1793 to secure design-build authority for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project.

113 Public Information

The SCCRTC provided the media, local jurisdictions and chambers of commerce press releases about the Highway 1 Widening environmental analysis open houses, the transportation sales tax/expenditure plan, draft EIR for Recreational Rail, and the scope of the environmental analysis for the Regional Transportation Plan update. In addition, the RTC continued to provide information/highlights from the monthly meetings about Commission actions.

Two public meetings were held to gather input about environmental concerns on the environmental impact analysis for the Highway 1 Widening/HOV lane project. Staff

facilitated small group sessions to provide an opportunity to both comment and listen to other attendee's priority issues.

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. Staff continued to administer the E-News program of its website to alert subscribers news regarding the Commission's high priority projects.

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 has been working with the CHP, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) SAFE, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) and the San Luis Obispo SAFE to privatize call box call answering through MTC SAFE's contract. Staff visited MTC SAFE's private call answering center and the Golden Gate CHP Communications Center to better understand how call box calls are handled by the private call answering center and transferred to the CHP when necessary.

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. Staff attended one meeting of the Safe on 17 Task Force and began preparing an annual report for the Safe on 17 program.

Working with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Caltrans and the CHP, staff evaluated proposals and interviewed bidding tow contractors for a new FSP towing services contract for Highway 17.

179 Transportation Demand Management - Commuter Services

The Commission's Don't Drive One in Five campaign was halted per RTC direction. At the May, 2004 meeting, the RTC reallocated the campaign's remaining CMAQ funds to other projects. Staff has been transitioning materials and resources from its advertising consultants to in-house systems, as appropriate.

Commission staff continued administering the second phase of the Vanpool Incentive Program (VIP) while also beginning wrap-up efforts due to the program expiration's date coming up in August, 2004. Commission staff continued working with the SCATMA on general outreach, and presented Commute Solutions materials and resources at several SCATMA employer workshops. Commission staff, as approved by the RTC, sponsored a

SCATMA grant to the MBUAPCD for an expanded Emergency Ride Home program that, if approved, would be available to Commute Solutions ridematching database carpoolers and vanpoolers.

Staff completed an extensive evaluation as stipulated by the RTC under CMAQ grant provisions. 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 various entities in their promotion of sustainable transportation modes and coordinated with area agencies and employers. Topic highlights have included obesity rates due to inactivity, dispersed land use patterns and dependence on single occupancy vehicles, as well as rising gas prices.

Park and Ride Lot program administration and development efforts (in the Watsonville area specifically) continued as did ex-officio service on the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association.

231 Transportation Monitoring and Evaluation

Through the period, staff collected traffic data at over 40 locations, including regular locations monitored on an ongoing basis and special requests from local agencies. Staff is now implementing an updated Multi-Year Monitoring Program approved by the Interagency Transportation Advisory Committee (ITAC), including monitoring locations consistent with the screen lines used by AMBAG for the regional travel model.

Historic and current traffic data is now posted on RTC's website for easy access and updated on a monthly basis. Through this period staff also responded to requests for information from local agencies, business and service agencies.

411 Land Use/Transportation Coordination

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 two 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 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 twice. Discussion focused on the ADA Paratransit, Paratransit Coordination Task Force, Section 5310 local review scores, unmet needs, Transportation Development Act (TDA) claims from the Volunteer Center and Community Bridges, TDA funding request from the City of Scotts Valley for pedestrian improvements, accessible taxi services and existing services/role of governing boards. Also included were reports from the service providers.

The Commission approved formation of the Paratransit Coordination Task Force. Members were appointed, goals and a work program were developed, and the Task Force held its first meeting.

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 (MTP). Following a public hearing in April, the Commission approved the draft project list based on the draft financial element. A consultant was hired to prepare the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the RTP and MTP and a public meeting soliciting input on the scope of the EIR was held. Staff also continued to work on coordinating the text and other elements of the plans.

631 Transportation System Management

Staff participated in arranging and participated in a joint Safe on 17 Task Force and Traffic Operations System (TOS) Oversight Committee meeting. Staff continued to coordinate with Caltrans and the CHP on usage of and enhancements to the existing traffic information system. The Caltrans installed dynamic curve warning sign and video camera on Highway 17 southbound before Glenwood Drive became fully operational.

641 Transportation Improvement Program

The Commission adopted the *2004 Regional Transportation Improvement Program* (RTIP), which included the region's federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds. Staff has worked with Metro, legislators, and local community groups to advocate for inclusion of projects in the *2004 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)*, as they were listed in the adopted RTIP. Staff also worked with AMBAG on development of the draft Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP).

Staff attended monthly meetings of the California Transportation Commission and the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies Group that centered on the impacts of the state budget deficit on STIP and SHOPP projects, development of the 2004 STIP, and

future GARVEE bonds. 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 met with Caltrans 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 one time this quarter.

682 Rail/Trail Authority

Public Affairs Management (PAM) prepared a draft environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed recreational rail service between Capitola and Aptos with an extension to Seascapes. The draft EIR was presented to the Commission at its May 20, 2004 Transportation Policy Workshop (TPW) meeting. The Commission released the draft EIR for a 60 day public comment period with comments due on July 21, 2004. Staff distributed the draft EIR to agencies, organizations, individuals and libraries and placed the draft EIR on the Commission's website. Staff addressed inquiries on the draft EIR.

The appraisal consultants proceeded with their work to produce the various appraisals of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line required by Caltrans. Preliminary drafts of the Going Concern Valuation (GCV) and the Net Liquidation Valuation of Tracks, Signals, Structures and Other Railroad Improvements were produced by the consultants and reviewed by the review appraisal consultant.

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, continued its preparation of draft business plan for ownership of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line.

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

684

In April, two Public Information meetings and a Resource Agency meeting were held to provide an opportunity to comment on project alternatives, impacts and issues to be considered as part of the preliminary design/environmental review process. These meetings coincided with release of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and 30 day comment period. Caltrans and RTC coordinated efforts on distributing the NOP to local, regional, state and federal agencies. The RTC separately distributed nearly 12,000 public meeting announcements to residents, homeowners and businesses along the corridor, and to civic, community and environmental justice organizations, recreational and environmental groups in RTC's database. Meeting announcements were also distributed electronically and through display ads in newspaper publications throughout the County, including the Spanish publication *La Ganga*.

Over 150 people attended the two public information meetings and nearly 300 verbal and written comments were received from the public. These comments will be published in a *Summary Report* to be presented to the RTC in September and subsequently posted on RTC's website. Comments were received from over ten resource agencies in response to the NOP.

In the meantime, work is nearly complete on the *Historic Architectural Field Survey* and *Extended Phase I Archaeological Survey Report*. The project consultants have also formally submitted the Noise Work Plan to Caltrans for review, while work continues on the *Community Impact Assessment Report* and documentation on *Wetlands Delineation*.

The project consultants prepared administrative drafts of two technical White Papers on *Pedestrian/Bicycle Overcrossings* and *Direct Bus/Carpool Access to HOV Facilities* reports. These reports are currently under review by members of the Project Development Team and will be used to get policy direction on the location of the proposed pedestrian overcrossings of the freeway and consideration of project alternatives to be studied through the PA/ED process.

Project consultants and staff met with representatives of the City of Capitola for continued discussion on alternative design plans for the proposed Collector/Distributor between the Bay/Porter and 41st Street Interchanges. An administrative draft *Supplemental Project Study Report* (PSR) for the southern segment, not previously covered in the approved PSR was submitted to Caltrans for review. The project's critical path continues to be release of AMBAG's Regional Travel Model so work can begin on traffic operational analysis.

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 ½-cent sales tax measure for transportation. The Commission released the draft Expenditure Plan and Ordinance for public review, held a public hearing, approved the project list and funding assumptions for the measure, and held additional meetings to fine-tune elements of the expenditure plan and ordinance of the measure

Staff attended monthly meetings of the Self Help Counties Coalition to track efforts in other counties working on transportation sales tax measures.

Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)

The HCA adopted a budget for FY 03-04 and FY 04-05 which indicates work will continue for the first half of FY 04-05 to complete the start up task required to transition responsibility for the PSA/ED contract from the RTC to the HCA. A mid-year budget amendment is proposed in FY 04-05 once work is completed to transfer project activities and a consultant agreement has been negotiated to provide the administrative services to the HCA and satisfy PA/ED project oversight responsibilities.

Four proposals were received in response to the Request for Proposals to provide Administrative Services to the HCA. A Consultant Evaluation Committee was created and the committee conducted interviews of all consultant teams in late June.

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

Staff met with Caltrans and staff from local jurisdictions for one Project Development Team meeting this quarter discussing: project design, traffic management, right-of-way/utility negotiations, funding, project schedule, public outreach 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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