

INTERAGENCY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ITAC)

MINUTES

Thursday, August 19, 2004
1:30 p.m.

SCCRTC Conference Room
1523 Pacific Ave.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

ITAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandra Coley, Pajaro Valley TMA
Mark Dettle, City of Santa Cruz Planning Proxy
Thomas Hiltner, Santa Cruz Metro Transit District
David Koch, City of Watsonville Public Works
Maria Esther Rodriguez, City of Watsonville Planning
Charles Sanchez, Caltrans District 5
Chris Schneider, City of Santa Cruz Public Works
Les White, Santa Cruz Metro Transit District
Bill Williamson, County Public Works and Planning Proxy
Majid Yamin, City of Scotts Valley Public Works and Planning Proxy

STAFF PRESENT

Rachel Moriconi
Sean Co
Grace Blakeslee
Pat Dellin

OTHERS PRESENT

Rich Krumholtz
Pat Spence

Chair David Koch called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

1. Introductions -- Introductions were made.

2. Oral Communications

Rachel Moriconi reminded everyone that Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Programs are due to Caltrans at the end of September. She also circulated a card for Wes Scott, UCSC's Transportation and Parking Service (TAPS), whose son passed away last week. She also announced that Caltrans is having a workshop on the Community Planning grants program on September 9 in San Luis Obispo. Rich Krumholtz and Charles Sanchez recommended contacting District 5 staff for more information.

3. Status of Ongoing Transportation Projects, Programs, Studies and Planning Documents

County of Santa Cruz – Bill Williamson reported that the County will be constructing the two Kings Creek bridges, East Cliff bluff improvement, and Harkin Slough projects this summer. He noted that the El Rancho Drive rehabilitation project is out to bid. He noted that Caltrans staff, including Mike Guiliano's staff, Steve Price, and Bret Masse, have done an excellent job working with the County to deliver this project. He noted that the global steel shortage may impact some projects.

SCMTD – Tom Hiltner reported that the Transit District anticipates making another round of major service cuts in the fall. He noted that public hearings on the proposed service cuts will be held on June 14th in Scotts Valley, June 15th in Santa Cruz, and June 17th in Watsonville.

Caltrans – Charles Sanchez reported that the Governor's May Budget Revision has given renewed life to the Transportation Congestion Relief Program (TCRP), which could help move the Santa Cruz Metro Center (Pacific Station) project forward.

Pajaro Valley TMA – Sandy Coley reported that the TMA is promoting the Metro bus system through its "Hop on the Bus Gus" program and has partnered with La Manzana to distribute bus passes to people who have never used the bus before. The TMA continues to implement the "Going Places Making Choices" program and distributing several bicycle lights.

SCCRTC -- Rachel Moriconi reported that the Regional Transportation Commission has released the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on the Recreation Rail project. A public hearing on the DEIR is scheduled for the evening of June 17, 2004 at the County Board of Supervisors Chamber.

4. Additions/Changes to the Agenda – None

CONSENT AGENDA (Schneiter/Williamson)

5. **Approved Minutes of the May 20, 2004 Meeting**
6. **Received Highlights of the June 2004 Commission meeting**
7. **Received July 27, 2004 SCCRTC News Release "Santa Cruz County Transportation Sales Tax Measure Headed to November Ballot"**
8. **Received Update on Highway 1 Projects**
 - a. **Copy of August 19, 2004 Staff Report to the SCCRTC**
9. **Received Final Report on the Traffic Signal Battery Backup Project**
 - b. **Copy of August 5, 2004 Staff Report to the SCCRTC**
10. **Received Report on Funding Transfers for the Highway 1/HOV PA/ED and Local Projects**
 - c. **Copy of June 17, 2004 Staff Report to the SCCRTC**

REGULAR AGENDA

11. **Recommended Projects for 2003/04 Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) Funds**

Rachel Moriconi reported that \$2.7 million is available to exchange this year. The City of Capitola indicated that the City would not be using the previously exchanged funds for the Village Multimodal Station project in the near future and was willing to temporarily revert the funds back to RSTP until the project is ready to proceed. She recommended the ITAC recommend the Committee recommend that the Commission approve exchanges as listed on Attachment 1.

Majid Yamin noted that the City of Scotts Valley would be ready to proceed with the Hacienda Bike/Sidewalk project and requested that those funds also be recommended for exchange.

Given that there were sufficient funds to accommodate this additional request, staff amended its recommendation to include the Hacienda project.

The ITAC unanimously approved a motion (Rodriguez/Schneiter) recommending the Commission exchange approximately \$2.4 million in federal RSTP funds for state funds (RSTPX) for seven projects and temporarily revert \$268,000 in RSTPX funds to RSTP for the delayed Capitola Village project.

12. **Received State Budget Update**

Rachel Moriconi reported that the recently adopted State Budget has again impacted the level of funding available for State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), SHOPP, and Transportation Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) projects, as it again suspends Proposition 42. As a result, the California Transportation Commission has suspended all fund allocations, except for emergency and urgent safety projects on state highways, until December. She noted that Propositions 68 and 70 may impact whether the CTC is able to release funds in December.

Rich Krumholtz emphasized that Caltrans projects are also being impacted by the budget shortfall and that staffing will be tight over the coming year, but that the Department has not yet mentioned layoffs.

13. **Discussed Impacts of the 2004 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Recommended Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) Amendments**

Rachel Moriconi summarized the adopted 2004 STIP, including the differences in nine projects from the SCCRTC-approved RTIP. The most notable difference was that MetroBase had not been reinstated in the STIP despite broad community support. She noted that the Commission will need to consider whether or not to use GARVEE bonds to ensure that the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes project remains on schedule. She reviewed the various options available to keep other STIP projects moving forward, including AB872, AB3090 Replacements and Reimbursements, advance allocations, and trading funding years for different projects.

Regarding the MetroBase project, Ms. Moriconi put forward a proposal whereby \$7.5 million in unprogrammed RSTP funds be utilized to fill the funding gap. She recommended the ITAC recommend that the Commission take two steps: 1. trade up to \$7.5 million in FY06/07-08/09 STIP funds for FY06/07-08/09 RSTP funds for road rehabilitation projects listed in the 2004 STIP; and 2. program the freed up STIP funds to the MetroBase project. She noted that the trade for the local road rehab projects would allow those project sponsors to later trade for STP Exchange funds, a category of funding that is easier to access and easier to use for these types of projects than STIP funds. She asked project sponsors to indicate if they would like to trade STIP funds for RSTP funds for any of their projects.

Chris Schneider, City of Santa Cruz, noted that he did not see any disadvantages to changing the funds, especially since the RSTP funds are much "cleaner" than STIP funds. Staff noted that project sponsors would have to wait until the Commission had to the RSTP Exchange funds to be reimbursed for the funds. Mr. Schneider noted that given the recent trend of delaying STIP projects by the state, that the RSTP funds would probably be available sooner.

Commissioner Pat Spence introduced herself as a paratransit user and Metro Board member, noting that moving forward with the MetroBase project is important and that if there is a way to do so without jeopardizing other projects it would be greatly appreciated.

Les White noted that Metro had expected the \$7.8 million in STIP funds back this year. Unfortunately, when the Metro lost the funds, the CTC gave them away to other projects in the state in 2002. He noted that Metro staff is very supportive of the RTC staff recommendation.

Rachel Moriconi noted that another option that had been considered was to temporarily deprogram a STIP project then reprogram the funds to that project as soon as the CTC released the region's unprogrammed balance of STIP funds. She noted that City of Watsonville staff had indicated that they were willing to consider this option if the Commission approved a resolution committing to reprogramming the funds. However, with the new proposal from staff, deprogramming a current STIP project would not be necessary. By contrast, the new proposal was a win-win for all parties.

Chris Schneider and Mark Dettle stated that the City of Santa Cruz would like to change all of their STIP funds to RSTP funds. Rachel Moriconi noted that for projects that have significant additional funding needs, project sponsors should continue to follow the federal rules for their projects in order to avoid having to go back later if additional federal funds are secured for a project. The City indicated that they would like to exchange funds for Front Street as soon as possible, as the project is scheduled to go to construction this fall.

Bill Williamson noted that he would need to check in with other staff at County Public Works about whether or not the County wanted to change any of their STIP funds to RSTP funds.

Maria Rodriguez and David Koch noted that the City of Watsonville would like to change STIP funds to RSTP funds for their two projects and Majid Yamin noted that the City of Scotts Valley would like to change STIP funds to RSTP for their two projects, with the Scotts Valley Drive/Victor Square project being its first priority. Staff indicated that there should be sufficient RSTP funds available to accommodate all of these requests and the County's Roadways Rehabilitation projects.

Rachel Moriconi noted that since most of the local jurisdictions' STIP projects are programmed in FY05/06 and 06/07, it may be possible for the MetroBase project to be programmed in FY06/07 which might eliminate the need for SCMTC to issue bonds for the project.

The ITAC unanimously approved a motion (White/Hiltner) recommending that the Commission amend the RTIP to trade up to \$7.5 million in STIP funds for RSTP funds for projects identified by project sponsors and program the freed up STIP funds and/or a portion of the FY06/07-08/09 RSTP funds totaling \$7.5 million to the MetroBase project.

14. **Discussed Rerouting and Relinquishment of State Highways**

Rachel Moriconi noted that recently discussions have occurred regarding possibly rerouting portions of Highways 9, 129, and 152. As such she requested that Rich Krumholtz provide an overview of process by which highways are rerouted or relinquished to local jurisdictions.

Rich Krumholtz introduced himself as the Caltrans Deputy District Director for Planning. He noted that relinquishment is discussed every few years, especially for routes that run through towns. He noted that Caltrans takes its job of safety very seriously and that sometimes restricts the design of roadways through main streets. He noted that former Caltrans Director Jeff Morales and District 5 Director Gregg Albright have made significant pushes for context sensitive design in recent years, emphasizing public trust by being more sensitive to community needs. He noted that in 1995 Caltrans identified several possible routes for relinquishment and noted that Highways 129 and 152 were not on the list given that they support interregional travel and goods movement. He noted that since they make up Watsonville's main streets, Caltrans is trying to work to make them function as both.

Mr. Krumholtz noted that some communities do not think Caltrans gives them enough leeway to meet their visions and at those points rerouting and relinquishment are most often pursued. He noted that several years ago Route 227 was rerouted through San Luis Obispo and that the new route makes much more sense. He noted that the City of Arroyo Grande had pursued relinquishment of a route through its area, but was unable to come to consensus and the effort was dropped.

He noted that it is very important to Caltrans not to truncate the system. He noted that in anticipation that some of the recommendations of the recent California Performance Review will come to fruition, Caltrans is working on a process to show how it works. He noted that in the past, when a highway was rerouted it was typically in the form of a new bypass, then the old route was relinquished. However, he noted that environmental impacts and fiscal constraints have made these options less popular.

Chris Schneider asked if it was possible for Caltrans to relinquish small portions of their right-of-way. He noted this occurred for the River Street sign at Highways 1 and 9. Rich Krumholtz responded that Caltrans does sometimes also relinquish sidewalks to local jurisdictions, which gives a jurisdiction the ability to allow restaurants with outside food. He noted that the challenge in historic districts is that the relinquishment must undergo SHPPPO 106 process.

Mr. Schneider asked if Caltrans would relinquish medians, noted the City's desire for street trees on Mission Street. Mr. Krumholtz responded that though he likes tree lined streets, Caltrans is very concerned about drivers running into the trees and exposing maintenance workers.

David Koch noted the City of Watsonville has had problems putting in monuments at the entrances to the City. He noted that the Caltrans manual was too strict, yet it gives much more flexibility for utility polls. Mr. Schneider added that the logic seems to lacking in the manuals.

Commissioner Spence stated her belief that most locals use Airport to Green Valley to Highway 152, rather than Main Street. She also noted that the Holohan/College intersection needs significant work. Mr. Krumholtz confirmed that discussions about that intersection will likely be occurring. He noted that Caltrans may look into combining routes 129 and 152 through Watsonville/south county, but first needs to figure out where the truck traffic is going. He also noted that development in the Watsonville area could also influence where a new route could even go and that people who live along the area proposed as the new route are often opposed to the proposals.

Bill Williamson noted that he is impressed by the recently completed Rogge/129 improvements. He noted that the County is hard pressed to maintain what they have now. Rachel Moriconi noted that rerouting may be attractive to the County, as it could put Caltrans in charge of maintaining certain roadways.

Rachel Moriconi thanked Rich Krumholtz and Charles Sanchez for their work preparing this presentation. Mr. Krumholtz noted that the Commission has asked Caltrans to study rerouting 152, but that the budget has limited its ability to initiate the studies. He noted that a draft flow chart on relinquishments is in the works.

15. Received Report on the California Performance Review

Rachel Moriconi reviewed the highlights and some of the concerns regarding the recommendations of the California Performance Review (CPR). She recommended members review the recommendations of the CPR and determine if their own agencies should be submitting comments to the State.

In response to a question from Tom Hiltner, Ms. Moriconi noted that the CPR was prepared by upper level staff throughout the state, with input from some consultants.

16. Adjournment – Chair Koch adjourned the meeting at 3:21 p.m.

The next meeting of the ITAC is scheduled for September 23, 2004 at 1:30 P.M. in the SCCRTC Conference Room, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz.

Respectfully Submitted

Rachel Moriconi, Senior Transportation Planner