

Draft Environmental Impact Report for the 2005 Regional Transportation Plan

Summary

In order to evaluate the possible impacts that the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's *Draft 2005 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)*, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's (TAMC) *Draft RTP* for Monterey County, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments' (AMBAG) *Draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)* may have on the environment, the environmental consultant for this project, Lamphier-Gregory has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). The DEIR was distributed to SCCRTC Commissioners, responsible agencies, and libraries in February 2005, is posted on the Commission's web site (www.sccrtc.org), and was made available in a computer CD version.

The DEIR is consistent with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for program-level environmental review. It addresses issues identified in the Initial Study and by the public and by responsible agencies during the scoping process for the EIR. Though the DEIR considers some of the impacts that specific projects listed in these three plans might have on the environment, based on their descriptions in the RTPs, it is a program-level EIR. Each transportation project will undergo separate project-level environmental review prior to implementation.

The DEIR finds several significant and unavoidable impacts that implementation of the three plans might have on the environment. These impacts include possible:

- X Localized traffic congestion
- X Conversion of agricultural lands to transportation infrastructure
- X Exposure of sensitive receptors to noise in excess of normally acceptable levels
- X Alteration of the county's rural areas to a somewhat more suburban or urban condition
- X Alteration of natural habitat areas and/or effects sensitive species

Many of these impacts will probably be mitigated for specific projects, however, because the feasibility of mitigation cannot be determined for specific projects at this time, the effects of implementing one or more of these projects may be significant and unavoidable. The DEIR also identifies significant but mitigable impacts, less than significant impacts and beneficial impacts of the plans. Impacts and mitigating measures should be considered by the appropriate jurisdiction and agency during the development of each transportation project.

The deadline for comments on the DEIR is April 1, 2005. The Final Environmental Impact Report, to be prepared by Lamphier-Gregory and presented to the Commission at a future meeting, will respond to all comments (oral and written) received during the public review period.

*For more information call SCCRTC at **460-3200**, visit www.sccrtc.org
or write to 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, 95060.*

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