

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FOURTH QUARTER FY 04-05 PROGRESS REPORT
April to June 2005

101 Work Program and Budget

During this quarter, the Commission amended both the FY04-05 and FY05-06 Budgets and Work Programs. The Commission also approved Transportation Development Act claims from SCMTD, Community Bridges, the Volunteer Center, the SCCRTC and the City of Watsonville.

General Administration

The Budget and Administration/ Personnel Committee met twice during this quarter. The Committee formulated recommendations for the RTC to separate from the administrative structure of the County of Santa Cruz. The SCCRTC approved these recommendations at its June meeting. The SCCRTC also postponed consideration of the recruitment for the permanent Executive Director position until January 2006.

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 meeting.

Through this period the staff monitored state legislative proposals and the budget process, providing updates to the RTC on potential state transportation funding scenarios. Staff, together with Assemblymember John Laird, held a Legislative Briefing for state and federal legislative staff to provide a status report on the RTC's proposed purchase of the Santa Cruz Branch Line from the Union Pacific Rail Road Company (UPRR). The purpose of this meeting was to secure legislative support and leadership on methods to secure funds previously programmed by the RTC to purchase the 31 mile Branch Line.

Staff has participated with other regional transportation planning agencies and the state to create the California Consensus Partnership for the Reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21). This consensus effort has provided a coordinated and consistent voice to congressional delegates on details of the comprehensive transportation bill now in Conference Committee with the goal of enhancing federal transportation revenue for California. Staff and the RTC's Washington Assistant have closely monitored and supported Congressman Sam Farr's earmark for the Soquel/Morrissey Merge Lane Project in the amount of \$3.67 million in the House version of the TEA-21 reauthorization bill.

Staff sent a letter to Congressman Sam Farr outlining the RTC's sequence of planning activities regarding the Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail (MBSST), the first step

being to complete public acquisition of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. Staff made presentations on this project to the E&D TAC and the Bicycle Committee. Staff attended the first meeting of the AMBAG MBSST Steering Committee. Staff forwarded RTC's request to AMBAG to add a seat on the 2-county steering committee for the MBSST to represent elderly and disabled pedestrian access issues for Santa Cruz County which was approved. Recruitment efforts continued to identify an individual representing agricultural interests to the MBSST steering committee.

113 Public Information

The SCCRTC provided the media, local jurisdictions and chambers of commerce press releases about the Public Hearing on the Final Regional Transportation Plan and Environmental Impact Report and the adopted State Budget. In addition, the RTC continued to provide information/highlights from the monthly meetings about Commission actions.

RTC staff and the Highway 1 consultant team has begun work on the first of three newsletters to inform the public on the progress of the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane Project. The newsletter will provide a description project alternatives identified for environmental analysis, a description of the range environmental studies that will be performed, information on the proposed bicycle/pedestrian crossings of Highway 1 and the proposed Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane project, and milestone project schedule of upcoming activities.

Improved organization, updates and maintenance to the current website continued. These included: posting current Commission packets and Committee agendas, 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 to alert subscribers about news regarding the Commission's high priority projects.

177 Freeway Service Patrol (FSP)

Staff worked with local CHP offices and MTC to transition the roles and responsibilities of management of the Santa Cruz Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) beats from MTC and Golden Gate CHP to SCCRTC and Santa Cruz County CHP. Staff held a meeting with Santa Cruz County CHP and the statewide CHP FSP Coordinator. SCCRTC staff will take over the necessary daily operations including procurement process for future beats, contract management and invoice procedures. Local CHP will take over field supervision and truck inspection.

Staff attended the quarterly statewide FSP meeting and continues to collaborate with statewide FSP programs to advocate for more statewide FSP funding and FSP data collection. The final state budget is expected to include \$20 million dollars for FSP programs. This is an increase of \$2 million from last year. The additional funds will make three new statewide programs whole and the remainder will be distributed according to the statewide formula. Santa Cruz County SAFE is expected to receive a similar allocation amount as last year. It is expected that the state budget will include funds for

STIP projects and that the Highway 1 FSP service will receive a STIP allocation for FY 05/06.

178 Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE)/Call Boxes

SCCRTC staff continued to work with the Commission's call box service providers, including Comarco Wireless Technologies, to maintain the system. Staff continues to work with Cingular to ensure that cellular service is charged according to the existing service contract. Staff attended CalSAFE meetings.

Staff worked in conjunction with MTC to complete a joint procurement process to add TTYs and digital conversion to Santa Cruz County's 124 call boxes. An RFP for these services was released in April. Three proposals were received by the June 10, 2005 deadline. SCCRTC, in conjunction with MTC, conducted interviews of the qualified proposers.

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. A meeting of the Safe on 17 Task Force was held in April.

179 Transportation Demand Management (TDM) - Commuter Services

Commission staff continued working with employers, partnering agencies and the Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association (SCATMA) on general sustainable transportation outreach. Staff continued to distribute relevant TDM materials developed for the Commission's former Don't Drive One in Five campaign.

Staff continued the process of developing an Emergency Ride Home program, as awarded by a MBUAPCD grant, to serve all Commute Solutions' ridematching database carpoolers and vanpoolers. Program development and implementation will be conducted by the SCATMA.

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 collaborating with RIDES for Bay Area Commuters for instant on-line ride matching system access and support. RIDES' contract with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission was terminated and a new contractor was chosen to administer the Regional Rideshare Program effective July 1, 2005. Staff worked with MTC and its new contractor, Parsons Brickerhoff, to ensure a seamless transition and uninterrupted public access to the ridematching database and technical assistance.

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.

Staff conducted park and ride study of Resurrection Church lots for inclusion in the final project report for MBUAPCD. Draft report is near completion, and will be submitted to the air district soon for final approval.

231 Transportation Monitoring and Evaluation

Through the period, staff collected traffic data at 36 locations, including regular locations monitored on an ongoing basis and special requests from local agencies. Staff revised the Multi-Year Monitoring Program in response to reduced allocation of staff resources, as presented in the approved FY 2005 Budget Amendment in November 2004. Along with the reduction in staff resources, the budget amendment provided \$5,000 for a private contractor to conduct traffic counts at selected locations where safety and liability concerns have been raised due to heavy traffic volumes. Traffic monitoring staff also contributed with research and data gathering for the draft Update of the *Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)*, and completed work on the final *2004 Traffic Monitoring Report*. Staff continues to post historic and current traffic data on RTC's website for easy public access and updates the information on a monthly basis.

Staff initiated a formal Request for Proposals to provide comprehensive traffic monitoring services for Santa Cruz County, and received proposals from a total of five engineering firms. A staff report will be submitted to the Commission in August, recommending that one of these firms be granted a renewable one-year contract for providing traffic monitoring services for RTC.

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 three times in this quarter. Staff provided the Bicycle Committee with monthly packets of information on current issues and followed up on projects as directed by the Committee. 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 and advertised the program to area entities.

621 Specialized Transportation

During this quarter, the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E/D TAC) met twice. Discussion focused on: changes to Metro's ADA Paratransit policies regarding missed trips; the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail and accessibility issues;

Taxi Scrip/Medical Voucher program changes; Highway 1 pedestrian and bicycle over-crossings; FY 05-06 TDA claims of Volunteer Center and Community Bridges; increasing the time allowed for pedestrian crossing at signalized intersections and committee officer elections and appointments. Also included were reports and presentations from service providers and planning staff.

622 Regional Transportation Plan

This quarter the Commission adopted the *2005 Regional Transportation Plan* and certified *Final Environmental Impact Report* (EIR), after reviewing comments that had been received on the draft documents. A public notice and changes from the draft were distributed, as well as being posted on the Commission's website. The Commission held one public hearing to receive verbal comments on the final documents.

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 updates of the county Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) and AMBAG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

631 Transportation System Management

Staff continued to coordinate with Caltrans and the CHP on usage of and enhancements to the existing traffic information system. Staff worked with the Central Coast Intelligent Transportation Systems Coordinating Group (CCITS) to finalize the regional ITS architecture brochure for the Central Coast and participated in one CCITS Coordinating Group meeting.

641 Transportation Improvement Program

This quarter the Commission amended the *2004 Regional Transportation Improvement Program* (RTIP) once to allocate state Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds to nine projects. Staff continued to meet with Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, Assemblymember Laird, Caltrans, and CTC staffs to refine the MetroBase and Rail Right-of-Way Acquisition projects AB3090 Reimbursement requests. Staff also prepared and submitted allocation requests to Caltrans for the Graham Hill Road Safety Project, Planning, Programming, and Monitoring (PPM), and the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP).

Staff continued to monitor progress with reauthorization and extensions of TEA-21. 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 proposals on STIP and SHOPP projects, and proposals for the 2006 STIP.

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 Sanctuary Scenic Trail, and the Wilder Ranch Phase 2 Bike Path project. Staff updated the database of projects funded by the SCCRTC. The ITAC met once this quarter.

682 Rail/Trail Authority

The public comment period for the revised draft environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed recreational rail service between Capitola and Aptos with an extension to Seascapes closed on April 5, 2005. In addition to the oral comments provided at the March 17, 2005 public hearing, nearly 50 pieces of correspondence with comments were received. Staff and consultants are working on the responses to all of the received comments.

The Commission submitted a draft Proposition 116 application to purchase the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line for corridor preservation to California Transportation Commission (CTC) staff and after minor comments were received, the Commission approved a final Proposition 116 application. The Commission approved a financial plan for the rail acquisition project and amended the Fiscal Year 04/05 budget to incorporate the financial plan. The Commission established the Rail Acquisition Task Force (RATF) as an ad hoc committee to work with staff and consultants on the rail acquisition project. The Commission reviewed and received comments on a draft request for proposals (RFP) for freight rail service on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. After incorporating comments the Commission approved the RFP for release once the necessary information was provided by Union Pacific. The Commission revised the timeline for the acquisition project based on the progress of negotiations and progress of various work elements. Some Commissioners and staff hosted a visit by two CTC Commissioners and two members of their staff to tour the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line and discuss the acquisition project and available funding. The Commission approved an amendment to the contract with Arthur Gimmy International for completion of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line appraisal.

The Rail Acquisition Task Force met several times during this period and worked with staff to host the CTC Commissioners, communicate with Assemblymember Laird and other legislators about the rail acquisition project, discuss with Coastal Conservancy staff details regarding the proposed reimbursable grant, and develop recommendations for the Commission on various aspects of the rail acquisition project.

Geomatrix Consultants completed the field work, sampling, analysis, and draft report for the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA). The draft report was presented to the Commission in closed session. American Title Company completed a preliminary title report of the parcels that compose the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line and the report was presented to the Commission. After working with staff to review proposals and informing the Commission, Miller, Owen & Trost selected a consultant to perform the structures assessment.

The Rail Acquisition Project Development Team (PDT) composed of SCCRTC staff and staff from the various funding and regulatory agencies involved in ensuring delivery of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition Project met twice during this period.

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.

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

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With approval of the project alternatives for development and analysis through the PA/ED process and authorized expenditure of Phase 2 project funding last quarter, work on all aspects of the project begins in earnest. The current project schedule estimates release of the draft environmental document in October 2007, and completion of the PA/ED process in April 2008.

Currently there are two critical path work items that could affect the project schedule: the traffic operations analysis and cultural resources, specifically archaeological subsurface investigation. The consultant team is now in receipt of AMBAG's Regional Travel Demand Model and initial efforts are focused on validating the base year model output compared with actual traffic counts collected by the consultant. Work will then begin on creating the future year (2030) base case (No-Build) traffic projection. To facilitate this work monthly teleconference meetings are held with key staff from Caltrans, AMBAG, RTC and the consultant team.

The methodology for archaeological site investigation work, the most critical time sensitive portion of the cultural resource analysis, is currently under review by Caltrans to insure compliance with regulations of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). To satisfy the requirements of the two agencies, the consultant team has prepared a matrix identifying the extent of project impacts incurred by the respective project alternatives. Initial contact has been made with local representatives of the Ohlone and Costanoan tribes. Prior to beginning the site work meetings will be held with the representatives to review the work plan. Meanwhile, Nolte's right-of-way sub-consultant is in negotiation with three private landowners to secure Right of Entry to conduct the site investigations.

Meanwhile work has progressed on "independent utility" project efforts as part of the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane Project: the Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project, and up to three pedestrian/bicycle crossings of Highway 1. To advance the Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project, Congressman Sam Farr was able to secure a \$3.67 million earmark in the House version of the federal TEA 21 reauthorization bill now under discussion in the Congressional Conference Committee. The Highway 1 project consultants have continued work on the preliminary design of this project to coordinate engineering issues with the Highway 1/17 Merge Lane Project. Staff and RTC's Washington Assistant continue to work with Congressman Farr and Senator Boxer's office to address any issues arising in the final TEA 21 reauthorization bill.

To advance work on identifying the best locations for three pedestrian/bicycle crossings of Highway 1, staff invited 26 community stakeholder organizations to participate in two evening meetings in May to gather information on pedestrian and cyclists travel patterns, demands, and potential facility design issues. Based on these meetings and previous meetings with local agencies, the staff and consultants once again met with local agency representatives to review the findings. The consultants prepared a draft report with recommendations for staff review and subsequent presentation to the RTC's committees (i.e. Elderly & Disabled Technical Advisory Committee, the Bicycle Committee, and the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee) prior to submittal to the RTC for comments

and approval.

As discussed above under Project Information, staff and the consultant team have begun work on the first of three project newsletters marking the major milestones recently completed. The newsletter will provide a description project alternatives identified for analysis, a description of the environmental studies that will be performed, and milestone project schedule.

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 quarterly Highway 1 Construction Authority meeting.

683 Highway 1 Planning

Expenditure Plan Development

At its June meeting, the Commission reviewed a proposal by Commissioner Wormhoudt to establish a Committee for a Comprehensive Transportation Funding Program.

Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)

The HCA met on April 1st and received a Quarterly Status Report on the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane Project, from Chris Metzger, the Project Manager for the Highway 1 Consultant Team. In other business, the HCA Board authorized a letter to State Legislators on behalf of the HCA opposing the continued diversion of Proposition 42 Transportation Revenues to the State General Fund.

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

Staff met with Caltrans and staff from local jurisdictions for one Project Development Team meeting this quarter and met with Caltrans District 5 staff several times to discuss: construction funding, final design, coordination of traffic issues with the City of Santa Cruz, sound wall design, right-of-way/utility negotiations, project schedule and the public awareness campaign. Caltrans has agreed to expand the capacity of the northbound off-ramp at Morrissey Boulevard to allow placement of a stop sign at the ramp intersection with adjacent local streets thereby improving pedestrian and bicycle safety at the request of the RTC and City of Santa Cruz.

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

The Commission allocated \$3.4 million in Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds to nine projects this quarter. Additionally, staff worked with the ITAC to consider revisions to the Commission's RSTPX policy and staff made payments to projects previously approved to receive RSTP Exchange funds and continued to monitor projects receiving those funds.

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