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INTERAGENCY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ITAC)

MINUTES

Special Meeting Date - Thursday, August 4, 2005
1:30 p.m.

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

ITAC MEMBERS PRESENT

John Barnes, University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC)
Mark Dettle, City of Santa Cruz Public Works and Planning Proxy
Steve Jesberg, City of Capitola Public Works and Planning Proxy
Don Hill, County Planning Proxy
David Koch, City of Watsonville Public Works
Mark McCumsey, Caltrans District 5
Todd Muck, AMBAG
John Presleigh, County Public Works
Maria Esther Rodriguez, City of Watsonville Community Development and PVTMA Proxies
Majid Yamin, City of Scotts Valley Public Works and Planning Proxy

STAFF PRESENT

Grace Blakeslee
Rachel Moriconi
Kim Shultz

OTHERS PRESENT - via telephone

Mike Giuliano, Caltrans Local Assistance
Donn Miyahara, Caltrans Local Assistance

Chair John Presleigh called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.

1. **Introductions** -- Introductions were made.
2. **Oral Communications** – Rachel Moriconi distributed a flyer on the Caltrans Planning Grants program
3. **Status of ongoing transportation projects, programs, studies and planning documents**

City of Capitola – Steve Jesberg reported that 41st Avenue/Gross Road project is underway. The City continues to work on utility issues for the project.

City of Santa Cruz – Mark Dettle reported that the Water and Front streets pavement rehabilitation contract will be awarded within the next few weeks. The City is also planning rubberized chip seals in the Harvey West area.

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County of Santa Cruz - The Valencia slipout repair bids will be released in September with the project scheduled for completion by November. The \$1.7 million Soquel Avenue/Drive sanitation, RDA, City Water, and Public Works overlay and dig out project is scheduled to go to construction in September/October.

Watsonville – The Watsonville Slough Bridge project near Ramsey Park is currently under construction. The Harkins Slough project near Ohlone is under design. Minor repairs throughout the city, including the Airport/Freedom Blvd area, will be made soon.

Scotts Valley – The Scotts Valley/Glenwood Drive intersection project is under construction, to be completed by October or November, weather permitting. Scotts Valley Drive will be repaved between Glenwood and Vine Hill. The City is considering rubberized asphalt for that project.

Caltrans – Rachel Moriconi reported that Highway 152 will be closed to through traffic for 40 days starting August 8, 2005. She noted that several roads in north Monterey County that link Highways 1 and 101 will also be closed several days over the next month.

RTC – Rachel Moriconi reported that the Commission has released the draft structural assessment report for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line and is forming a new transportation funding task force.

4. Additions/Changes to the Agenda – None.

CONSENT AGENDA (Jesberg/Dettle)

5. Approved Minutes of the May 19, 2005 Meeting

6. Received Highlights from the June 2005 Commission Meetings

REGULAR AGENDA

7. Approved Recommendations on the Highway 1 Bicycle/Pedestrian Crossings

Kim Shultz provided an overview of the current proposals for bicycle/pedestrian crossings of Highway 1. The list of potential new crossings was developed at stakeholder meetings and in consultation with public works departments. He discussed the three bicycle/pedestrian crossings recommended based on future demand and service provided. He noted that further analysis will be done to determine streetscapes at the bridge entries and whether zig-zag, spiral, or long entries are most appropriate. He mentioned that the Highway 1/San Lorenzo Bridge crossing would have been the highest priority, based on stakeholder input, but this project is being developed as a separate City of Santa Cruz project. **The ITAC approved the staff recommendation (Koch/Dettle) to recommend the Regional Transportation Commission approve the consultant recommendations.**

8. Received Information on the Highway 1 Morrissey-Soquel Auxiliary Lane Project

Kim Shultz provided an overview of the Highway 1 Morrissey-Soquel Auxiliary Lane Project. He explained that this project was one component of a Project Study Report previously completed by Caltrans and identified as an effective operational improvement on Highway 1. He reported that the recently approved Federal transportation act includes a \$2.9 million earmark for the project. He described the different options under consideration for the auxiliary lanes and how they will coordinate with the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project. As part of the proposed project, the La Fonda over-crossing would be widened enough to accommodate the planned Highway 1/HOV Widening Project. He noted potential wetland and noise impacts would be studied in the environmental document for the project.

9. Received Update on State and Federal Transportation Funding

Rachel Moriconi reported on reauthorization of the federal transportation bill and the adopted FY05/06 State Budget. The reauthorization bill provides returns of 92% to the State of California, versus the 90% returns received in the past. Though the State Budget restores Proposition 42 funds to transportation, the \$1 billion from Tribal Gaming Bond Revenues is tied up in litigation. Although this signifies a small increase in state transportation funds, it will not be enough for the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to allocate funds to all projects programmed in FY05/06. As such, the CTC has established allocation priorities for FY05/06. She also noted that AMBAG is considering whether to apply for the Regional Blueprint grant funds that were included in the budget. Todd Muck stated that local jurisdictions would be consulted if AMBAG does apply for the funds.

Rachel Moriconi noted that in addition to the earmark for the Highway 1 Morrissey-Soquel Auxiliary Lane Project, the current bill includes an earmark for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail, which will be split between AMBAG, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), and SCCRTC.

John Presleigh expressed frustration that the CTC puts SHOPP projects above all other projects and program, while putting local road rehabilitation projects at the bottom of their allocation priority list, despite both being related to maintaining the existing transportation system. He suggested that the RTC take a stance against this double standard. Todd Muck noted that the allocation plan seems to bypass SB45, which gives regional agencies the authority to identify their funding priorities for STIP funds. Staff noted that SB45 does afford the CTC the ability to set allocation priorities and suggested that unless the law is changed, project sponsors take these priorities into consideration when nominating projects for STIP funds. Mr. Presleigh stated that everyone needs to push to change the state's priorities and that he would bring the issue before the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). Mark Dettle added that in public opinion surveys (polls), local road maintenance has been identified as high of a priority as police and fire services.

10. Provided Input on Development of the 2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)

Rachel Moriconi provided an overview of how Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) funds are typically programmed into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). She noted that Caltrans's preliminary draft Fund Estimate for the 2006 STIP shows that if Proposition 42 revenues are diverted into the General Fund and prior loans are not repaid, the CTC will not be able to allocate any funds to projects currently programmed in the STIP. On the other hand, under the best case/optimistic scenario there may be up to \$2 billion available to program to new projects. Based on these figures there may be \$20 million in new regional STIP funds plus \$1 million in Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds available for programming in Santa Cruz County. She cautioned that it is unlikely that these funds will actually be realized within the next five years given recent trends.

Because the funds are unlikely, Ms. Moriconi recommended against holding a competitive process for the funds this year. Instead, she recommended programming 85% of projected new regional-STIP and TE funds to regionally significant projects and distributing the remainder of new funds to local jurisdictions, based on population. To make this a successful strategy, she suggested that local jurisdictions consider CTC allocation priorities, such as Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (HBRR)-matching funds and operational/capacity improvements, when selecting projects for their share of funds.

She also noted that Caltrans has expressed a willingness to consider the Highway 1 Morrissey-Soquel Auxiliary Lane project for the interregional share of STIP funds (ITIP) if the Commission considers programming RTIP funds to the project.

Finally, Ms. Moriconi requested that project sponsors review projects currently programmed in the RTIP and provide updated information to staff.

After viewing a preliminary list of regionally significant and local projects, David Koch recommended an 80/20 split for programming the funds to regional/local projects. Mark Dettle concurred with this suggestion, noting strong support for regionally significant projects. Several members also indicated an interest in the HBRR-match suggestion. Majid Yamin noted that though supportive of the split of local funds based on population, projects should also make sense and there should be some assurance of sufficient funds for a given project. John Presleigh noted that there remain insufficient funds to maintain our roads and asked the RTC to help them gain additional funds. Ms. Moriconi noted that the Commission's new Transportation Funding Task Force will be reminded of this deficiency.

The ITAC unanimously recommended that the RTC (Koch/Dettle):

1. Indicate its intent to:

a. Program 80% of projected new State Transportation Improvement

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Program (STIP) and STIP Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds to regionally significant projects, and

- b. Program the remainder of new funds (20%) to projects selected by local jurisdictions, distributed on a population basis, with consideration to be applied to smaller local jurisdictions to ensure sufficient funds to allow a minimum project be developed; and**
- 2. Indicate its intent to consider programming a portion of its regional share of STIP funds to the Highway 1 Soquel-Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project and request that Caltrans program 25% of the project costs in the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP).**

11. Received Information on Proposed Federal Funding Rule Changes and Impacts on Local Projects

Mike Giuliano, Caltrans District 5 - Local Assistance, presented information on FHWA's proposed rule change regarding "inactive" projects. Under the new rule, projects that have not submitted invoices within a 12 month period will be considered inactive and funds will be de-obligated. Caltrans will ask project sponsors to bill for projects every six months and submit final invoices in order to ensure that federal funds (including CMAQ, HBRR, ER) are not de-obligated from their projects. In addition, projects must be completed by the date listed on their project supplemental agreements. In response to the rule, Caltrans will work with project sponsors to ensure accurate completion dates/targets are noted and will have to provide regular status reports on projects. Caltrans and RTC staff requested to meet with project sponsors to update project information and discuss impacts of the new rule.

Todd Muck of AMBAG and RTC staff noted that in addition to this new rule, FHWA may also question the financial constraint of the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) if they believe that the STIP is not realistic.

12. Recommended the RTC Approve Proposed Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) Program Advance Project Delivery Policy

In an effort to provide more flexibility to project sponsors for delivering projects, Rachel Moriconi presented a proposal to allow project sponsors to proceed with projects programmed to receive RSTP funds in advance of formal RSTPX approval by the Commission, similar to an AB872 or AB3090 reimbursement for STIP funds. She noted that project sponsors would need to notify RTC staff of their intent to advance their project prior to proceeding. **The ITAC unanimously recommended the Regional Transportation Commission amend its Rules and Regulations to include the RSTPX Advance Project Delivery Policy.**

13. Adjournment – Chair Presleigh adjourned the meeting at 3:44 p.m.

The next meeting of the ITAC is scheduled for September 15, 2005 at 1:30 P.M. in the SCCRTC Conference Room, 1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz.

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Respectfully Submitted

Rachel Moriconi, Senior Transportation Planner

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