

TO: Regional Transportation Commission

FROM: Grace Blakeslee and Rachel Moriconi, Transportation Planners

RE: Draft *2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program*

---

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Review Interagency Technical Advisory Committee and staff recommendations for programming \$20 million in projected new State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds in the draft *2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)* (Attachments 1 and 2);
  2. Review the preliminary list of local jurisdiction projects;
  3. Consider the Bicycle Committee's general recommendation that more of the new funds be programmed to projects that serve alternative modes of transportation, rather than highway projects;
  4. Direct staff to return to the January meeting with more specific recommendations from the Bicycle Committee, as well as recommendations from the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee;
  5. Notify staff if there are different projects the RTC would like to consider for programming in the 2006 RTIP, so that they can be properly noticed to the public; and
  6. Schedule a public hearing for January 5, 2006 to receive public input on programming the \$20 million in new STIP funds, to review and approve changes to existing projects as identified by ITAC members, and to adopt the final *2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)*.
- 

## **BACKGROUND**

Under state transportation statutes established by SB 45 in 1998, state and federal funding for various types of transportation projects is programmed every two years through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is the process by which regions receive certain state and federal funds from the California Transportation Commission.

The STIP consists of two broad programs:

1. The regional program funded from 75% of new STIP funding, and
2. The interregional program funded from 25% of new STIP funding.

The 75% regional program is further subdivided by formula into county shares. County shares are available solely for projects determined by regions in their *Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)*. These projects must be included in or be consistent with the *Regional Transportation Plan* (adopted by the Regional Transportation Commission in May 2005). Once projects are selected locally, the California Transportation Commission reviews the entire RTIP, accepts or rejects the program as a whole, or may require changes to match projected funds statewide.

Caltrans nominates state highway and rail projects for the interregional program, through the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP).

In Santa Cruz County, the RTIP serves as a summary of all the federal and state funds programmed or tracked by the Regional Transportation Commission. The 2004 RTIP was adopted by the RTC in April 2004, though several amendments have been made to the document since that time. The 2004 STIP and RTIP covered the five-year period from FY 2004/05 through FY 2008/09.

The 2006 STIP and RTIP cover an additional two years, through FY 2010/11. In order to meet California Transportation Commission deadlines, the RTC must adopt the final RTIP by January 30, 2006. The CTC is scheduled to adopt the 2006 STIP in April 2006.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Available Funding

Based on the best-case scenario outlined in the *2006 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Fund Estimate* (repayment of nearly \$5 billion in loans previously diverted to the State General Fund and release of Proposition 42 funds to transportation every year), the California Transportation Commission (CTC) estimates that over the next five years \$20 million in new STIP funds will be available for projects in Santa Cruz County. Although the CTC admits that this is a very optimistic scenario, categorized by one California Transportation Commission (CTC) staff member as “fantasy money,” the CTC is using these funding projections as the basis for adopting the 2006 STIP. It is highly unlikely that the new projected STIP funds will be realized in the time frame of the 2006 STIP unless the Legislature and the Governor make changes to guarantee state transportation revenues over the long term.

Of the \$20 million in new funds available for programming in the 2006 RTIP, \$596,000 is from STIP funds the RTC traded for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) for the Commute Solutions Rideshare Program in March 2005. Additionally, because the STIP also includes Transportation Enhancement funds, at least \$648,000 of these new funds must be programmed to transportation enhancement projects (such as bike and pedestrian facilities).

According to the 2006 STIP Fund Estimate, a significant amount of the new programming capacity statewide will only be available for transit/rail and Transportation Enhancement projects in the first three years of the 2006 STIP. Additionally, the Fund Estimate shows how much funding the CTC can program to projects in each year. As such, after receipt of RTIP proposals from regions throughout the state, the CTC may require regions to revisit their proposals and shift the proposed funding year for some of their projects in order to ensure that programming statewide is consistent with the funding projections in the Fund Estimate.

### Process

At its September 1, 2005 meeting, the RTC approved an Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) and staff recommendation to forego a competitive process for programming the new STIP funding capacity. Instead, the RTC decided that it will:

- Program 80% (\$16 million) of the projected new State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds to regionally significant projects;
- Consider programming a portion of this regionally-significant-project funding to the Highway 1 Soquel-Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project; and
- Program the remaining 20% (\$4 million) in new programming capacity 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.

### Regionally Significant Projects

There is no shortage of regionally significant projects that could use the new STIP funds. The staff recommendation (Attachments 1-3) is based on the general programming process approved by the Commission at its September meeting, the California Transportation Commission's funding guidelines and project priorities (Attachment 4), and priorities identified by Commissioners, local jurisdictions, Caltrans, the Transit District, and the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee. Staff recommends programming 80% of the funds to the following regionally significant projects:

- The Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes project
- Highway 1-Harkins Slough Road Interchange project
- Highway 1/HOV Lanes project
- Highway 1/9 Intersection project
- Highway 1 Bridge Widening over San Lorenzo River
- The Santa Cruz Coastal Trail (Encompasses a network of trails, some of which may fall on the Rail/Trail and the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail)
- The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail – Matching funds to Federal Earmark
- Transit Trip Planner (automated web and phone based bus info)
- Highway 1 Freeway Service Patrol
- Regional Rideshare program (Commute Solutions)

- RTC's Project Funding and Delivery Program (Programming, Planning & Monitoring – PPM)

Project features, costs and proposed STIP funding are detailed in Attachments 1 and 3.

#### Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project

For the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes project, Caltrans District 5 has submitted a proposal to Caltrans Headquarters to fund \$1.9 million of the project with Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) funds. However, Caltrans has indicated that it is highly unlikely that \$1.9 million in ITIP will be programmed to this project because Caltrans Headquarters is focusing new ITIP funds to existing ITIP projects that have cost increases, rather than adding new projects into the ITIP. For that reason, the staff recommendation holds \$1.9 million of our region's share of STIP funds for this project. In the event that Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) funds are secured for the project, staff recommends redistributing the \$1.9 million between the Highway 1/Harkins Slough Road Interchange, Highway 1/9 Intersection, and Highway 1 Bridge Widening over San Lorenzo River.

#### 2008 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Other projects may be considered for programming in the 2008 STIP as additional information about those projects becomes available. Design work for the Highway 1 Widening/HOV Lane project would fall into this category. The SCMTD General Manager indicates that the 2008 STIP cycle would also be the appropriate time to consider if additional funds are needed for Phase 2 of the MetroBase project and/or the Santa Cruz Metro Center/Pacific Station Reconstruction.

#### Local Jurisdiction Projects

Consistent with RTC direction at its September meeting, for the latter 20% to local jurisdictions, local public works departments have identified projects, yet to be confirmed by some of their boards, for each of their shares of funds (shown in Attachment 2). Requests for the new STIP funds were due to Commission staff on October 20, 2005. Staff has been working with lead agencies to gather project information, including updated project costs and schedules, and finalize the required Project Study Reports for proposed new projects. Staff encouraged project sponsors to direct funds to projects that meet CTC priorities. Since local jurisdictions were given discretion to identify projects for their shares of funds, staff and the ITAC recommend that the RTC incorporate their chosen projects into the 2006 RTIP.

#### Committee Review and Recommendations

The ITAC and Bicycle Committee reviewed the projects and staff recommendations at their October and November meetings. The ITAC concurred with staff recommendations for programming the \$20 million. The Bicycle Committee tabled formal project recommendations until their December meeting, but stated that they would like to see more of the funds programmed to projects that serve alternative modes of transportation and that the proposed list

of regionally significant projects is heavily biased towards highways. The Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee will review the proposals at its December meeting.

**Staff recommends that the Commission review the ITAC and staff recommended list of projects to be considered for the \$20 million in new funds (Attachments 1 and 2); consider the Bicycle Committee's general recommendation to program more funds to alternative mode projects; and direct staff to return with specific recommendations from the Bicycle Committee and Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee in January.**

#### Public Hearing on Final 2006 RTIP

Consistent with RTC Rules and Regulations, prior to adoption of the RTIP, the RTC must hold a public hearing to receive public input on the proposed program of projects. **Staff recommends the RTC schedule the public hearing to be held at the regular RTC meeting on January 5, 2006.** The hearing will be advertised in local newspapers and include the list of regionally significant projects recommended to receive new funds. As such, **staff recommends the RTC notify staff if you have any changes to the list of projects to be advertised, so they can be properly noticed to the public.**

#### **SUMMARY**

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission is required to submit the 2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program, programming \$20 million in 2006 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds, to the California Transportation Commission by January 30, 2006. This report shows the staff recommendations proposed to be noticed for a public hearing in January. Summaries of the projects are attached. Staff recommends the Commission review the project list, indicate if other projects should be noticed to the public, and schedule a public hearing for the January 5, 2005 Commission meeting to adopt the 2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).

- Attachments:
1. Regionally Significant Projects
  2. Preliminary List of Local Jurisdiction Projects
  3. Project Summaries
  4. California Transportation Commission Funding Priorities