



*Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
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NEWS RELEASE

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RTC Approves Projects to Receive \$20 Million in State Transportation Improvement Funds

Following a public hearing at its January 6, 2006 meeting, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission awarded \$20 million in projected federal and state funds to 21 local transportation projects through adoption of the *2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program*. These funds will help fund highway improvement projects, local road rehabilitation projects, traffic management, bicycle projects and pedestrian projects over the next five years.

One of the key responsibilities of the Regional Transportation Commission is to identify transportation needs in the region and select projects to receive funding as state and federal transportation monies become available. Eighty percent of the projected funding was designated for transportation projects of regional significance including Auxiliary Lanes on Highway 1 between the Soquel Ave and Morrissey Boulevard interchanges, the Highway 1/Harkins Slough Road Interchange Project, the Highway 1/9 Intersection Improvement Project, and building a network of bicycle and pedestrian trails and paths which may include portions of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST). Twenty percent of the available funding was programmed to projects identified by local jurisdictions which improve local road, bicycle and pedestrian networks.

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In total, 35 percent of the new funding was programmed to highway improvements, 16 percent to pedestrian projects, 14 percent to bicycle projects, 13 percent to local road rehabilitation projects, 7 percent to Transportation System Management, 5 percent to Transportation Demand Management, Public Transit, and Planning. Commissioner Beautz said, "I am sure that everybody here, including myself, has some of these projects that they would just assume not see and some they like well... This is a good compromise".

During the public meeting, Commission staff warned that a great deal of uncertainty remains regarding when the projected \$20 million will actually be released by the State. Since 2002, the Governor and State Legislature have diverted approximately \$5 billion in funds designated for transportation to other non-transportation projects and programs in order to backfill the State General Fund. Release of the \$20 million to the selected projects in Santa Cruz County is dependent on repayment of these prior "loans" and the release of revenues from the sales tax on gasoline to transportation, as mandated by voters through Proposition 42, each year.

The *2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)*, including the list of projects designated to receive \$20 million and the related staff report, are available for review at the Regional Transportation Commission's website: www.sccrtc.org/rtip and during business hours at the Commission's office at 1523 Pacific Avenue in downtown Santa Cruz.

For more information, call SCCRTC at 831-460-3200 or visit www.sccrtc.org.

Attachment: Projects Approved for New Funding

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