

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
SECOND QUARTER FY 05-06 PROGRESS REPORT
October to December 2005

101 Work Program and Budget

During this quarter, the Commission approved an amended FY 05-06 budget and work program. Staff began preparing the budget and work program for FY 06/07.

General Administration

The Budget and Administration/ Personnel (B&A/P) Committee met four times during this quarter. The Committee directed staff and consultants in the implementation of the SCCRTC Autonomy project. The Committee made recommendations regarding amendments to the Commission's FY05-06 budget, including the addition of staff to work with the Transportation Funding Task Force and SCCRTC Autonomy projects; a budget for the Transportation Funding Task Force and recruitment for a permanent Executive Director. The Committee also reviewed the Caltrans audit findings and made recommendations on potential accounting procedures changes. In addition, the Committee reviewed the indirect cost allocation plan for FY05-06 and overhead rate, and authorized the Executive Director to certify the plan. The SCCRTC approved the B&A/P Committee recommendations and hired CPS Human Resource Services for the recruitment of an Executive Director.

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.

Through this period staff initiated the process to prepare the 2006 State and Federal Legislative Agendas. A report on actions and accomplishments in 2005 was produced and Assemblymember John Laird made a presentation on the accomplishments of 2005 and the outlook for 2006. SCCRTC staff pursued discussions with legislative staff, and the SCCRTC Washington Assistant, Carolyn Chaney, on the legislative priorities and possibilities for 2006. Staff reviewed the legislative agendas prepared by regional advocacy organizations such as the California Council of Governments (CALCOG), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) Group and Self Help Counties Coalition. Staff also participated in the Legislative Workshop sponsored by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in Oakland attended by RTPAs and MPOs from throughout the state.

113 Public Information

The SCCRTC provided the media, local jurisdictions and chambers of commerce press releases about the completion of the Scotts Valley/Glenwood Drive intersection funded

by the Commission, approval of a reimbursable grant by the Coastal Conservancy for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line Acquisition project and designation of 11 regional projects and 10 local projects totaling \$20 million in new state funds to submit to the California Transportation Commission for the 2006 State Transportation Improvement Program. In addition, the RTC continued to provide information/highlights about Commission actions at its monthly meetings.

SCCRTC staff, Caltrans and City of Santa Cruz staff continued to work on the public information campaign for the Highway 1/17 Interchange Merge Lanes project. Improvements were made to the project web site, highway signs were planned and a mailer to residents is under development.

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

RTC and Caltrans staff are collaborating in the development of separate websites, to be maintained by the respective agencies, featuring the Highway 1 HOV Lane Widening Project and the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project. The Caltrans website should be operational by the 3rd Quarter of this year.

On November 17th, a public meeting was held for the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project. The meeting featured a Caltrans Open House format from 6:00 to 7:15 p.m. followed by an RTC Public Hearing beginning at 7:30 p.m. with a presentation by the Highway 1 consultants on the purpose and needs of the project, conceptual design options, potential environmental impacts, the project development schedule and estimated project costs. A Summary Report of the meetings will be prepared and incorporated into the environmental documentation for the project, including all comments received from the public.

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 a new template and new content for the Commission's redesigned website, now tentatively scheduled for public posting by March. 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 continued to administer the FSP Program including the preparation of invoices and administration of FSP Program contracts. Staff prepared a new draft MOU for related FSP Program administrative duties shared by MTC and SCCRTC. Staff compiled FSP statistics for 2005 which track FSP Program assists and performance. Staff continued to

track the FSP Program budget for 2005/2006 and prepared the draft FSP budget for 2006/2007.

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, Cingular wireless and Connections Communications to maintain the system. Staff recommended extending the current Comarco Wireless Technologies call box maintenance contract to allow time for completion of the call box TTY and digital upgrades before negotiating a new maintenance contract. Staff reviewed call box cellular use and recommended that the RTC continue to contract with Cingular Wireless for call box cellular service after the call boxes have been converted from analogue to digital cellular service.

Staff continued to administer the Safe on 17 Program. Staff worked with MTC to extend the Safe on 17 Program for three additional years. The Commission approved funding for the continuation of the Safe on 17 Program at the October RTC meeting. Staff worked in conjunction with CHP to host a Safe on 17 Task Force meeting. Meeting participants discussed collision and citation rates on Highway 17 to date for 2005, communication among different CHP areas and Caltrans districts, Caltrans maintenance and planned Highway 17 safety projects.

179 Transportation Demand Management (TDM) - Commuter Services

Through employer contacts, the website, the 429-POOL phone line, and follow up contacts, Commute Solutions produced match lists and provided follow up services and referrals. Staff continued collaborating with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and its new contractor, Parsons Brinckerhoff, for instant on-line ride matching system access. A seamless transition and uninterrupted public access to the ridematching database and technical assistance was ensured in transitioning rideshare services from the previous contractor to Parson Brinckerhoff.

Commission staff continued making presentations to area employers/organizations as a result of increased interest in the Commute Solutions program resulting from the Santa Cruz Metro Transit District strike. Commission staff also continued working with employers, partner agencies, the Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association (SCATMA), and the Pajaro Valley Transportation Management Association (PVTMA) 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 finalized preparations for a Folding Bikes in Buses Program which secured a grant from the MBUAPCD to the SCATMA through SCCRTC public agency sponsorship. Program development and implementation will be conducted by the SCATMA.

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 continued as did ex-officio service on the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association.

Staff conducted a park and ride study of the Resurrection Church lots for inclusion in the final project report for an MBUAPCD grant. The final report was completed, submitted to the air district, and approved.

231 Transportation Monitoring and Evaluation

In August, the Commission approved entering into a contract with Field Data Services (FDS) for traffic monitoring services. FDS will be providing updated traffic monitoring data on a regular basis for the remainder of the fiscal year, and staff will continue to post this data on the public website, and respond to public and Commission requests for statistical information related to traffic monitoring.

411 Land Use/Transportation Coordination

Staff continued to monitor and review draft environmental documents for projects with potential transportation impacts. Staff provided comments on the draft Highway 1 and Highway 17 Transportation Concept Reports prepared by Caltrans. Transportation Concept Reports are 20 year planning documents prepared for transportation corridors managed by Caltrans.

Staff provided comments on the Watsonville General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report and the University of Santa Cruz Long Range Development Draft Environmental Impact Report.

614 Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Program

The Bicycle Committee met three times during this quarter. Staff provided the Bicycle Committee with a monthly packet 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 and the Bike to Work/School Programs.

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.

In cooperation with Commissioner Pirie's staff, SCCRTC staff organized a meeting to discuss organized bicycle rides and their impacts to the local communities through which they are routed.

Staff continued implementing and promoting the new Pedestrian Access Reporting Program whereby members of the public report sidewalk problems and other pedestrian

access issues to the Commission. Commission staff then forwarded complaints and followed-up with local jurisdictions.

621 Specialized Transportation

During this quarter, the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E/D TAC) met twice. Discussion focused on: representation on the newly formed Transportation Funding Task Force, implementation scenarios for the Paratransit Coordination Task Force recommendations; the Pedestrian Access Report; upgrading highway call boxes to include TTY technology, projects to be included in the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan, planned Modern Roundabouts in the City of Santa Cruz, and a review of taxi ordinances. Also included were reports and presentations from service providers and planning staff.

622 Regional Transportation Plan

Staff continued to work with local agencies to implement the projects and policies included in the *Regional Transportation Plan* through their planning and capital improvement program actions and monitor projects to ensure consistency with the RTP.

631 Transportation System Management

Staff hosted a Traffic Operation Systems Oversight Committee meeting in conjunction with the joint Safe on 17 Task Force. The Committee discussed the handling of incidents on the Highway 17 corridor, the use of Changeable Message Signs and the Highway Advisory Radios, communications between stakeholders, Highway 17 safety projects and maintenance needs.

Staff continued to coordinate with Caltrans and the CHP on usage of and enhancements to the existing traffic information system. Staff participated in one CCITS Coordinating Group meeting and discussed components of the regional ITS Architecture document currently being developed for the Central Coast region through a consultant contract managed by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments.

641 Transportation Improvement Program

Staff met repeatedly with project sponsors to update project information for the Draft *2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)*. Staff met with the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee, Bicycle Committee, and Elderly/Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee to review and receive input on the staff recommendations for programming \$20 million in projected new funds. Staff produced the Draft 2006 RTIP, including new text, maps, graphs, and project lists. Public hearing notices and news releases were distributed to the media and members of public.

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 on State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and State Highway Operation Protection Program (SHOPP) projects and proposals for the 2006 STIP.

The Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) met twice this quarter. Discussions focused on RTIP development, state and federal legislation, and the SHOPP.

Expenditure Plan Development (Transportation Funding Task Force)

The Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee of the RTC approved a budget and work plan for the Transportation Funding Task Force activities for a 12-month period spanning two fiscal years. The budget and work plan were subsequently approved by the RTC and included in the RTC's overall budget and work program. The RTC agreed to increase the contract with Eileen Goodwin for consultant services for this project. Staff notified organizations about the formation of a Comprehensive Transportation Funding Task Force and requested that they designate representatives to serve on the Task Force. In addition, regular planning meetings were held with convener Fred Keeley, consultants and staff.

682 Rail/Trail Authority

Staff and consultants continued to work to begin the additional detailed analyses recommended for some of the structures on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. Union Pacific agreed to contribute up to \$30,000 towards the cost of the additional detailed analysis for the La Selva Beach Trestle and to make the final report public. Staff and consultants continue to work on the details of necessary amendments to the right of entry agreement. The SCCRTC approved hiring HNTB Corporation to produce the additional detailed structural analyses and Biggs Cardosa Associates to provide peer review. Union Pacific began making repairs to the La Selva Beach Trestle in November 2005 and staff began working with the RATF to produce a revised project timeline that incorporates the project delays resulting from the structural assessment work.

Staff and consultants, with the aid of the Rail Acquisition Task Force (RATF) and County Counsel, negotiated with the Coastal Conservancy staff payback and restrictive covenants language to be included in the Coastal Conservancy reimbursable grant agreement and the SCCRTC approved the negotiated language and moving forward with a request to the Coastal Conservancy for the \$10 million reimbursable grant. SCCRTC and Coastal Conservancy prepared the necessary materials for the Coastal Conservancy's November 2005 meeting. Commissioners, SCCRTC staff and Coastal Conservancy staff made a presentation to the Coastal Conservancy at its November 2005 meeting as it considered the reimbursable grant and the Coastal Conservancy approved the reimbursable grant.

The Rail Acquisition Task Force met several times during this period and worked with staff on language to be included in the Coastal Conservancy reimbursable grant agreement, funding for the additional structural assessment work, mapping of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line and development of recommendations for the Commission on various other aspects of the rail acquisition project.

RTC received the final Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line right-of-way (ROW) maps. These maps are intended for information purposes and serve as a reference for the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line ROW. The maps are now available in hard copy, CD or on the RTC website.

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 once during this period.

The RTC continued to negotiate with Union Pacific on the rail line acquisition through its negotiator, Kirk Trost of Miller, Owen and Trost, and the RTC was informed of progress in closed sessions.

Staff and consultants worked to finalize the title report for all of the parcels composing the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line and all of the other information required by the appraisal consultants to complete the appraisals.

Staff and consultants continued to work on the responses to all of the received comments for the draft environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed recreational rail service between Capitola and Aptos with an extension to Seascapes.

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

684

Through this period work continued on all aspects of the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project PA/ED process. The project schedule was extended 18 months due to the extended timeframe resulting from delays in receipt of the travel demand model and requirements associated with subsurface exploration of cultural resources. Both of these items are now on the critical path. The completion date is now anticipated in early 2010.

To prepare for the potential increase in contract costs resulting from the extended project schedule, staff included a recommendation for an additional \$500,000 for this project in the proposed 2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). This recommendation does not authorize the expenditure of those funds. The RTC will have to take a separate action to amend the consultant contract, and this action would occur later in the project schedule only if the contract increase becomes necessary.

Members of the project team (Caltrans, AMBAG, RTC staff, and consultant team) continued to meet monthly to review progress on the traffic analysis work items. Specific milestone/decisions reached during this period include: completing calibration of freeway counts with the travel demand model's base year results; finalizing the model network for the No-Build Alternative and neared completion on the network for the Build Alternatives; adopting an effective methodology to modify traffic projections from the model year of 2030 to 2035 as required for the environmental document.

Select members of the project development team met in San Luis Obispo to review highway design issues associated with the reduced geometry alternative. The reduced geometry alternative has a smaller footprint than the full standard design alternative, with the goal of reducing the impact on the environment, community and reducing the construction cost.

Work continued on the first project newsletter for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project. RTC staff and Caltrans are collaborating on the development of separate websites for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project and the Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project.

Highway 1 Soquel Avenue to Morrissey Boulevard Auxiliary Lanes Project

Work progressed on establishing the Highway 1 Soquel Avenue to Morrissey Boulevard Auxiliary Lanes Project as an “independent utility” project to the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project. The consultant team began the final draft Supplemental Project Study Report (SPSR) based on comments received from Caltrans on a previous draft. The SPSR will supersede the PSR prepared by Caltrans in 2002, and is required to approve this project in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Based on the draft Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report (PEAR), the consultant team recommended a mitigated Categorical Exemption for the Highway 1 Soquel Avenue to Morrissey Boulevard Auxiliary Lanes Project to satisfy environmental documentation requirements. This level of environmental analysis would take approximately 18 months to complete and is estimated to cost \$1 million. Some cost savings will be realized due to the environmental and design activity already underway as part of the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project.

Caltrans District 5 prepared and submitted an Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) funding application as a partnership effort of local, state, and federal funding participation. State legislators provided letters of support for the application. The application requested 25% of the unfunded project costs or \$1.9 million after deducting the federal earmark, secured in SAFETEA-LU by Congressman Farr, and the required local match.

By direction of the RTC, staff prepared a cost and funding proposal for all phases of the project development process, including construction, for consideration and inclusion in the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP). Staff prepared two funding proposals, one that included receipt of ITIP funds and another that does not include those funds.

Caltrans and the RTC collaborated on an Open House and Public Hearing for this project on November 17th, as discussed in another section of this report. A Summary Report of the meetings will be prepared and incorporated into the environmental documentation for the project, including all comments received from the public.

683 Highway 1 Planning

Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)

The HCA met on November 4th, and received a Quarterly Status Report on the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project, from Chris Metzger, the Project Manager for the Highway 1 Consultant Team. The HCA Board also created a subcommittee to appoint a representative to the Transportation Funding Task Force.

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

At the end of the last quarter, the California Transportation Commission approved allocation (release) of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds for this

project. As a result, the Project Development Team (PDT) for this project started monthly meetings. Caltrans set the estimated construction start date as Spring 2006 and advertised the bid package for the construction project. RTC, Caltrans and the City of Santa Cruz staff restarted planning activities for the public awareness campaign including the development of highway signs, a mailer for residents and an enhanced web page. Caltrans funds for the RTC's Transportation Management Plan were included in the RTC's overall budget and work program and plans for the Transportation Management Plan were reviewed with the PDT and Caltrans.

At a Project Development Team meeting this quarter, staff worked with Caltrans on construction timing issues due to need to begin tree removal before the start of the bird nesting season but before it is definitively known if construction can start in the Spring. Caltrans staff briefed the RTC on the issue and the PDT developed a plan to release the tree removal contract after it is known if adequate construction bids have been received.

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

Staff made payments to projects previously approved to receive RSTP Exchange funds and continued to monitor projects receiving those funds. Staff worked with County Counsel to refine the ITAC's recommended revisions to the Commission's RSTPX policy.

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