

AGENDA: January 11, 2007

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Kim Shultz, Senior Transportation Planner
RE: Draft 2007 Legislative Agenda

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Adopt the Draft 2007 State and Federal Legislative Agendas (Attachments 1 and 2, respectively);
 2. Forward the Legislative Agendas to our State and Federal representatives; and,
 3. Direct staff to continue to provide periodic status reports on development of the funding programs included in Proposition 1B Transportation Bond Measure and other associated legislative matters.
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BACKGROUND

Every year the Commission adopts a legislative agenda to guide its support and opposition of state and federal legislative or administrative actions. The Commission approved a preliminary Draft 2007 Legislative Agenda at its November 2007 meeting and released it for review by the Commission's Committees.

DISCUSSION

Since the Commission's action in November staff has reviewed the Draft 2007 Legislative Agendas with the RTC's committees, and as previously reported with RTC's Sacramento Assistants John Arriaga and Steve Schnaidt, and RTC's Washington Assistant Carolyn Chaney & Associates. Staff has also participated with regional transportation planning agencies and coordinating committees on legislative matters, including: the California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG). The result of these meetings, as discussed below, is that very few changes have been made to the preliminary Draft 2007 Legislative Agenda approved by the RTC in November.

Bicycle Committee

The Bicycle Committee had no formal comments on the draft legislative agendas. Information was provided to staff on state and federal legislation of interest to the California Bicycle Coalition from the prior year's legislative sessions.

Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee

The Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee did request that the state legislative agenda support increased state funding to match federal funding of the federal elderly and disabled transit programs financed through the Section 5310 program and Titles III & IV of the Older Americans Act. **This request is consistent with the current wording in the Federal Legislative Agenda to increase federal funding for these programs and staff recommends the State Legislative Agenda be so amended.**

Interagency Technical Advisory Committee

The Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) requested that the Federal Legislative Agenda be amended to include local streets and roads in the list of improvement categories for which increased federal funding is pursued. Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (SCMTD) staff participating in the meeting confirmed the continued need for federal funds for the development of Pacific Station.

Clarification was requested in the State Legislative Agenda pertaining to Regional Blue Print Plans. **Staff agrees clarification is necessary and recommends deleting reference to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and clarifying concern that the Regional Blue Print planning process becomes a prerequisite to receive transportation capital improvement funds.**

Regional Transportation Planning Partners

Staff participates in various regional transportation forums sharing legislative agendas and priorities in the upcoming year. Of particular interest to our transportation partners in the upcoming state legislative session will be the timing for floating the bonds necessary to implement Proposition 1B Transportation Bond Measure in light of the continued state budget deficit.

Proposition 1B also left the guidelines for certain transportation funding programs to be developed by the legislature. Those funding categories include:

- \$2 billion for the Local Street and Road Improvement, Congestion Relief, and Traffic Safety Account
- \$1 billion for the State-Local Partnership Program Account
- \$1 billion for the Transit System Safety, Security and Disaster Response Account

Staff will continue to work closely with the California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) which is actively engaged in the development of guidelines for the transportation

bond measure. Attachment 3 is a list of CALCOG's 2007 *Priority Actions* as an information item.

This legislative session a record number of newly elected legislators will be serving their first term of office. The Senate welcomed 12 new members to the 40 member body, many of which came from the Assembly. The Assembly has 36 new members out of a total of 80 seats. Attachment 4 is a roster (distributed separately) identifying the many new faces of statewide officers and legislators (prepared by the California Chamber of Commerce).

State Legislative Agenda

The Draft 2007 State Legislative Agenda (Attachment 1) has been amended to include the direction the Commission gave to staff in November and the recommendations of RTC's advisory committees discussed above. Item number 7 has been amended as follows:

- To include a list of projects (item 7a) to be submitted for Corridor Management Improvement Account (CMIA) funds through the Proposition 1B Transportation Bond Measure (the subject of another item in this agenda):
 - Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes and Morrissey Interchange Project
 - Highway 1 Park Avenue to Bay/Porter Street Auxiliary Lanes Project (still being considered for submittal)
 - Highway 1 41st Street to Soquel Avenue Auxiliary Lanes Project (still being considered for submittal)
- Amend language in the 1st and 3rd bullets consistent with direction given by the Commission in November (item 7b).
- Amend the 6th bullet consistent with recommendations of the Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (item 7b).

At the November Commission meeting, a request was made of staff to provide information on examples of transit-oriented development (TOD). Coincidentally, a number of regional agencies in the Bay Area have recently collaborated on a publication entitled *New Places, New Choices: Transit-Oriented Development in the San Francisco Bay Area* (Attachment 5, distributed separately) which provides information including transportation performance measures and profiles of 10 TOD projects in the Bay Area including upcoming TOD projects. Additional copies of this publication can be ordered through the MTC-ABAG Library, either by phone (510-817-5836) or email (library@mtc.ca.gov).

Federal Legislative Agenda and Update on Federal Legislative Issues

The Draft 2007 Federal Legislative Agenda (Attachment 2) has been amended only slightly to include the requested language of the ITAC to add local street and roads to the list of improvement categories for which increased federal funding is pursued.

The RTC's Washington Assistant, Carolyn Chaney, provides a report (Attachment 6) on the current Department of Transportation Budget and a perspective on transportation matters in the 110th Congress. Federal appropriation earmarks previously included in the proposed FY 2007 Transportation Budget have been eliminated by the incoming Chairpersons of the respective

Appropriation Committees in the House and Senate. Affected projects include Pacific Station and the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail. Staff has been notified that appropriation earmarks may be resumed in the FY 2008 Budget.

Ms. Chaney reports that California appears to be well positioned to guide discussions on the future direction of federal transportation policy - a critical issue given declining Highway Trust Fund revenues. Ms. Chaney further reports that the new Chairpersons of committees with jurisdiction over transportation issues have a history of supporting multi-modal transportation.

There continues to be concern at the national level about the fact that gas tax revenues are not meeting projections used in the new federal transportation act (SAFETEA-LU). This has sparked some discussion the possibility of raising the gas tax (Attachment 7).

Staff proposes to provide periodic status reports on the development of transportation funding programs, including implementing measures for the state's Transportation Bond Measure, and other state and federal legislative matters through the year.

SUMMARY

Based upon input from RTC's Committees, RTC's Sacramento Assistants John Arriaga and Steve Schnaidt, and RTC's Washington Assistant Carolyn Chaney & Associates, staff has made modest revisions to the Draft 2007 State and Federal Legislative Agendas submitted in November 2006 and recommends approval as submitted in Attachment 1 and 2, respectively. Staff will forward the approved Legislative Agendas to our State and Federal representatives, and provide periodic status reports on development of the funding programs included in the Proposition 1B Transportation Bond Measure and other associated state and federal legislative matters.

Attachments:

1. Draft 2007 State Legislative Agenda, including the List of Priority Projects for Inclusion in the Corridor Management Improvement Account
2. Draft 2007 Federal Legislative Agenda
3. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG), 2007 Priority Actions, Adopted November 2006
4. *California Constitutional/Statewide Officers*, California Chamber of Commerce, December 2006 – **To be distributed at the RTC meeting**
5. *New Places, New Choices: Transit-Oriented Development in the San Francisco Bay Area*, Published by the MTC-ABAG Library, November 2006 – **To be distributed at the RTC meeting**
6. Federal Transportation Update, Carolyn Chaney & Associates, December 13, 2006
7. Raise the Gas Tax, by N. Gregory Mankiw, *The Wall Street Journal*, October 20, 2006