

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
SECOND QUARTER FY 06-07 PROGRESS REPORT
October to December 2006

101 Work Program and Budget

During this quarter, staff focused on closure of the FY 05-06 budget and work program, the required fiscal audit of FY 05-06, and amendments to the FY 06-07 budget and work program.

General Administration

The Budget and Administration/ Personnel (B&A/P) Committee met twice this quarter. The Committee directed staff and consultants and made recommendations on the final actions required for the RTC to become an autonomous public agency on November 4, 2006. New Human Resources, Administration and Fiscal Policies were implemented and procedures to new implemented policies commenced. Hiring for the new position of Administrative Services Officer was completed. The Commission's fall budget amendment for FY 06-07 was approved

112 Plan Coordination

During this quarter, staff attended regular meetings of the California Transportation Commission (CTC), the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) Group, the California Association of Councils of Government (CalCOG), the Caltrans Regional Coordination Group, and the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (SCMTD) Board of Directors. Staff also participated in regional coordination meetings with staff from the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC).

In November, acting on the recommendations of the Consultant Evaluation Committee, the Commission authorized the Executive Director to execute an agreement with the consultant team lead by JEA & Associates to serve as the RTC's State Transportation/ Legislative Strategist through June 2007. The principals of the consultant team are John Arriaga, President of JEA & Associates, and Steve Schnaidt, Principal of Schnaidt & Associates. The consultant team will assist the RTC to develop and maintain an effective presence in state affairs and secure the maximum amount of state funding possible.

In November, the Commission provided comments on the Draft 2007 State and Federal Legislative Agendas and directed staff to present the draft agendas to the Commission's committees for review and comment. Through this period the draft agendas were presented to the Commission's Bicycle Committee, the Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee, and the Interagency Technical Advisory Committee.

In December, Assemblymember John Laird provided an oral presentation of the year past and upcoming legislative issues to be addressed by the state legislature. A focus of discussion was the projected state budget deficit and when to authorize floating of the

infrastructure bonds approved in November, including the \$19.9 billion Transportation Infrastructure Bond.

The Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) met twice this quarter. Discussions focused on Proposition 1B programs, including the Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) and State-Local Partnership Program, and the proposed process for programming new State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), and Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds.

RTC staff met with AMBAG staff to discuss the current status of the regional travel demand model and begin coordinating the planned update of the model.

113 Public Information

The SCCRTC provided the media, local jurisdictions and chambers of commerce press releases about the local implications of state-wide voter approved Transportation Funding Bonds. 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 implementation of the public information campaign for the Highway 1/17 Interchange Merge Lanes project by working with the media on articles related to the project. The main newspaper is running weekly articles about aspects of the project. The project hotline and website continue to provide information about project conditions and road closures. Caltrans staff continues to be available to directly answer inquires during regular business hours.

Following the Informational Open Houses on the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project held in late September, the consultant team began work on preparation of a Summary Report of those meetings to document the oral and written comments received on the project. These comments will be used to help guide the engineering and environmental analysis currently underway. Once reviewed and released by Caltrans, an executive summary of the comments will be posted on the RTC's Highway 1 website.

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. The Transportation Funding Task Force (TFTF) and Commute Solutions websites were also maintained and updated. Work on the remainder of the redesigned RTC site continues, employing a new and more user-friendly organizational structure. The first phase of this new website was already launched, beginning with a new "Highways" page that is linked from the current site. Staff also continued work on implementation on an internal website, or "Intranet," for use by staff.

177 Freeway Service Patrol (FSP)

Staff continued to administer the FSP Program including administration and oversight of two existing FSP Program contracts. The Funding Transfer Agreement with Caltrans for Santa Cruz County's distribution of FSP Statewide funds was finalized and the funds

invoiced for during this quarter. FSP statistics for Highway 17 and Highway 1 beats were kept updated.

Staff responded to contractor's requests for copies of the 2007 FSP RFP and questions regarding the RFP. Staff hosted one Pre-Proposal Conference for interested contractors and attended a Price Proposal Workshop hosted by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Staff prepared and released one addendum to the RFP for the 2007 Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) RFP which made minor modifications to the original RFP and stated the proposed variable fuel price mechanism for contracts. Staff evaluated the existing mechanism for addressing changes in fuel prices and recommended to the RTC that a new variable fuel price mechanism be included in the 2007 FSP contracts. The 2007 FSP Procurement Evaluation Committee including RTC staff, CHP and Caltrans met to discuss and evaluate proposals received in response to the RFP. In response to comments and concerns discussed by the Evaluation Committee, staff prepared follow up letters to contractors who submitted proposals requesting clarification on proposal items.

178 Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE)/Call Boxes

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. Call box usage reports were updated and reviewed. Staff completed negotiations with Cingular Wireless for new digital cellular service to the call boxes. Staff coordinated with contractors to initiate the TTY and digital cellular upgrades during this quarter. Staff coordinated with SAFEs throughout the state to respond to CHP's notice to no longer handle rotation tow calls transferred to them through Call Box Private Call Answering Services.

Staff continued to administer the Safe on 17 Program including reviewing invoices and administering the Safe on 17 CHP enforcement contract.

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 contractor, Parsons Brinckerhoff, for instant on-line ride matching system access.

Commission staff 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 worked with the SCATMA on promoting the Emergency Ride Home and Folding Bikes in Buses programs. Grants for both programs were secured from the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District with SCCRTC public agency sponsorship. Program development and implementation are being conducted by the SCATMA with SCCRTC collaboration and oversight.

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.

In response to a Commissioner's inquiry, staff reported to the RTC regarding future funding options for the Transportation Management Associations once Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program funding is discontinued to the organizations and the region. The RTC approved holding a meeting with all Transportation Demand Management (TDM) providers to analyze TDM needs, strategies, and services in the region and how best to coordinate and implement TDM programs. Staff began preparations for conducting this analysis.

231 Transportation Monitoring and Evaluation

Field Data Services has conducted 11 scheduled traffic counts this quarter, and the resulting data has been entered into the RTC online traffic count database. Occupancy counts were also performed this quarter on Hwy 1 and Hwy 17. Coordination occurred with TAMC and AMBAG regarding the regional coordinated traffic counts program and RTC staff worked with legal counsel, and TAMC staff to draft an agreement to include Monterey County traffic counts in the RTC contract with Field Data Services.

411 Land Use/Transportation Coordination

Staff continued to monitor and review draft environmental documents for projects with potential transportation impacts. No comments were submitted this quarter.

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. Staff organized meetings with local jurisdiction representatives to review design elements of new projects, signs or roadways needing improvement. Staff also wrote letters in response to draft environmental reports and local bike way issues on behalf of the Bicycle 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 and prepared reports for the Commission's consideration of continued funding to the alternative transportation 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.

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 the submitted forms and followed-up with local jurisdictions.

Work continued on updating the 2004 Santa Cruz County Bikeways Map. Local jurisdictions provided needed changes to the map and a cartography consultant began making the first round of modifications.

621 Specialized Transportation

During this quarter, the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E/D TAC) met twice. Discussion focused on the following: standardization of taxi ordinances as they relate to the provision of specialized transportation, inclusion of specialized transportation projects in the locally developed draft transportation funding plan, New Freedom/Jobs Access Reverse Commute Grant planning update, transit lift/ramp procedures, an endorsement of a Caltrans Community Planning Grant application. Also included were reports and presentations from service providers and planning staff, including ongoing assessment of pedestrian and disabled persons' needs, as well as concerns over countywide taxi regulation conflicts.

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 staff continued to monitor projects to ensure consistency with the RTP.

631 Transportation System Management

Staff continued to coordinate with Caltrans and the CHP on enhancements to the existing traffic information system and to maintain the existing system. Staff continued to seek opportunities to coordinate TOS improvements with planned construction projects throughout the county.

Staff worked with the Central Coast Intelligent Transportation Systems (CCITS) Coordination Group to finalize outreach and plan materials including a CCITS DVD and Fact Sheet, the Interconnects and Flow portion of the plan and a user guide.

641 Transportation Improvement Program

Staff initiated the process to program new Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) phase-out, and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds. Staff reviewed fund estimates and near term Santa Cruz County transportation funds. Staff worked with project sponsors, Caltrans, and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) on a variety of funding amendments, allocations, and obligations. Staff continued to work with project sponsors to ensure state and federal funding deadlines and other requirements were met.

Staff attended monthly meetings of the California Transportation Commission and the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies group that centered on Proposition 1B programs and various state and federal regulations.

Transportation Funding Task Force

This project continues to be a major focus of staff time this quarter. Tasks included: development of a Draft Transportation Funding Plan and continued meetings with cohorts of business, environmental, social service, alternative transportation and neighborhood groups. The Draft Plan, which is expected to be released in late January 2007, will include three plan alternatives. The plan is expected to be a starting point for the TF Task Force negotiations to a single plan. Regular planning meetings continued to be held with the convener, consultants and staff.

682 Rail/Trail Authority

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 worked with the negotiations consultant and technical consultants to prepare information required for negotiations with Union Pacific.

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

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During this period, the Project Development Team's focus of attention has been on the development of geometric design plans for the respective project alternatives with data now available from the freeway operations model. The project consultants, RTC and Caltrans staff have continued discussions on the most critical issues at specific locations along the corridor where approval of nonstandard design features would avoid impacts or reduce project costs. The goal is to concentrate limited resources on those relevant, critical elements at mutually identified select locations and to minimize costly engineering analysis of project alternatives that ultimately are not selected as the preferred alternative. Once the preferred alternative is selected, more complete engineering work will be conducted as required to receive a formal design exception from Caltrans.

As part of this effort, meetings were held with local agency representatives to discuss design and operational issues for all freeway interchanges along the corridor. The focus of these meetings has been on matching projected travel demand to existing and future arterial improvements leading to and from the highway interchanges. Projected operating conditions at freeway interchanges were analyzed for years 2015 and 2035. This analysis is undertaken as part of the Freeway Operation Report scheduled for completion in the 3rd quarter of FY 06-07.

The Highway 1 HOV Lanes project has been utilizing the regional traffic demand model for the traffic analysis. In this quarter, RTC staff met with staff at AMBAG regarding the traffic demand model including the underlying assumptions and their effect on the Highway 1 traffic analysis.

Highway 1 Soquel Avenue to Morrissey Boulevard Auxiliary Lanes Project

In October, the Commission authorized execution of a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans for the Project Approval/Environmental Documentation (PA/ED) phase of the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project. The Cooperative Agreement outlines the respective roles and responsibilities of Caltrans and the RTC, serving as the “sponsoring agency” (i.e. the agency serving as the lead managing the work effort).

Through this period, RTC and Caltrans staff worked with the consultant team finalized the scope of services and cost estimate to complete the PA/ED phase. The RTC and Caltrans executed a Public Interest Finding – Sole Source Contracting to use the same consultant team working on the Highway 1 HOV Lane project for the Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project.

The RTC requested that the Caltrans’s Office of External Audits perform a pre-award audit of the proposed consultant contract. The objective of a pre-award is to review the provisions of the consultant contract to ensure requirements for record retention, method of payment, and appropriate cost and accounting practices. The pre-award audit also examines the Consultant’s proposed costs to determine if they are reasonable in relation to actual historical costs and estimating procedures, and that the consultant is capable of accumulating reasonable, allocable, and allowable costs.

In November, pending resolution of the findings of the pre-award audit, the Commission authorized the Executive Director to complete negotiations and execute a sole source contract with Nolte Associates, Inc., to complete the PA/ED phase of the Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project.

683 Highway 1 Planning

Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)

The HCA met in October and received a Quarterly Project Status Report on the Highway 1 HOV Lanes Project and the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project. The HCA authorized sending a letter to Will Kempton, Caltrans Director, Rich Krumholz, Caltrans District 5 Director, and the region’s state elected officials requesting \$8.4 million in state funding to address the funding shortfall to design and construct the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project.

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

Construction on this project will continue over the next three years. This quarter contractor crews continued constructing soundwalls the length of the project to minimize the construction impacts and highway noise to the neighbors, completed pilings for most of the bridges over creeks and reconstructed embankments. The RTC is continuing to work with employers and neighbors to minimize traffic through the interchange by promoting transportation demand management practices. The RTC is working with the City of Santa Cruz and Caltrans on outreach efforts associated with the public awareness campaign for neighbors, drivers, employers/employees, goods movement and emergency services.

Highway 1 - Corridor Mobility Improvement Account Project (CMIA) Applications

Staff regularly met with Caltrans and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) staff regarding the Proposition 1B - Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) program. In November, the Commission discussed possible projects to submit to the California Transportation Commission for the Proposition 1B Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) funding program, including the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project. In light of Caltrans and CTC concerns regarding the ability of the HOV Lane project to meet the very tight deadlines for the CMIA program, the Commission decided in December to nominate the Highway 1 Soquel-Morrissey Auxiliary Lane Project and directed staff to determine if any additional projects would be strong candidates for the program.

RTC and Caltrans staff, with input from the Highway 1 consultant team, worked closely to complete a joint project application for an “enhanced” Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project, which includes modifications to the Highway 1/Morrissey Avenue Interchange.

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. The RTC amended the FY06/07 Budget and Work Program to carryover projects from FY05/06 that had not yet been completed.

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