

DATE: March 1, 2007

TO: Regional Transportation Commission  
FROM: George Dondero, Executive Director  
RE: Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) Adoption

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

This item is for information only.

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## **BACKGROUND**

Proposition 1B included \$4.5 billion for the Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA). The California Transportation Commission (CTC) is the entity responsible for selecting projects for the program. In January the RTC nominated the Highway 1 Soquel Avenue to Morrissey Boulevard Auxiliary Lanes Project, the Highway 1 Park Avenue to Bay/Porter Auxiliary Lane project and the Highway 1 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue to Soquel Auxiliary Lane project for CMIA funding.

## **DISCUSSION**

On February 14th, Commissioners Campos and Pirie and the RTC Executive Director met with several key legislators and/or their staff, the staff director to the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee and CTC staff to discuss the RTC's CMIA proposals and other transportation priorities.

On February 16, 2007 California Transportation Commission (CTC) staff released their preliminary recommendations for programming \$2.8 billion of the \$4.5 billion designated for the CMIA program ([Attachment 1](#)). CTC staff recommends the CTC program the remaining funds in 2008. The CTC staff recommendations include \$12,698,000 for the Highway 1 Soquel Avenue to Morrissey Boulevard Auxiliary Lanes Project. If the CTC staff recommendation stands, the RTC will need to program approximately \$6 million from the region's share of STIP funds or other funding sources to ensure full funding of the project. The recommendations were based upon criteria which include Deliverability (the earlier the better), Appropriateness (as defined in the CMIA Guidelines) and Value (as determined through the Caltrans Benefit/Cost model), plus some undefined "individual assessment" of each project. The scoring system used does not directly correlate to those projects selected over others for funding.

The RTC requested \$21.4 million for the Bay/Porter-Park Auxiliary Lane project and \$18 million for the Soquel-41st Avenue Auxiliary Lanes Project. CTC staff does not recommend funding for either of these projects at this time. In addition, the Salinas Road Interchange on Highway 1 in Monterey County was recommended for funding. This project will benefit commuters to/from Santa Cruz and Monterey counties who travel this route.

The RTC Executive Director testified on behalf of the Santa Cruz County projects at a CTC hearing on February 20, 2007. The tone of the meeting could be described as contentious and uneasy. Many CTC Commissioners were critical of the CTC staff recommendations on a variety of issues. A common theme of agreement was to allocate more, if not all, of the \$4.5 billion in the CMIA program.

By the end of the day, Commissioners directed CTC staff to:

- update/rescore the projects for benefits, value and deliverability,
- develop a North/South breakdown from the recommendation list,
- consider the projects in the Governor's letter ([Attachment 2](#)),
- determine the availability of local funding for the projects,
- identify any funding gaps if full CMIA funding isn't provided (to avoid the risk of projects not being completed) and
- check with the Administration and Legislature whether delaying final action or deferring some allocations to a second round until April will upset either.

CTC staff recommended CMIA funding at only 70% of the construction cost of the Soquel Morrissey Hwy. 1 Project, suggesting that the remaining \$6 million would come from the RTC's county share of the 2006 STIP Augmentation. However, those STIP funds must also cover cost increases on the Hwy. 1/17 Merge Lanes project (yet to be determined) as well as other high-priority regional needs. RTC staff is requesting that *full funding* of the project from the CMIA be considered to ensure timely completion of the project while not jeopardizing existing projects. This issue was raised several times during the hearing, and it would appear the Commission does not wish to create new problems for the regions by partially funding projects.

The CTC is scheduled to adopt the CMIA program at a special meeting on February 28 in Irvine, California, although it appears that this deadline (established in statute) is being questioned by CTC commissioners. Overall the process has not been smooth, and is drawing the attention of state legislators ([Attachment 3](#)).

Staff will provide an oral report on CTC decisions at the March 1, 2007 RTC meeting.

- Attachments:
1. CTC Staff Recommendations
  2. Governor's Letter to the CTC
  3. Dan Walters article

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