

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FOURTH QUARTER FY 06-07 PROGRESS REPORT
April Through June 2007

101 Work Program and Budget

During this quarter staff worked on FY 06/07 and FY 07-08 budget amendments which, were approved by the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) in April and June. The hired auditor interviewed staff from the RTC and the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (SCMTD), received requested documents from the two agencies, reviewed all of the information and completed the triennial performance audit for the three fiscal years through June 30, 2006 (FY2004 to FY2006). The RTC audit was accepted by the RTC Board and transmitted to the State in June. In addition, staff also participated in the annual Monterey Bay Region MPO meeting, where the overall work programs for the region's transportation planning agencies and the metropolitan planning organization were reviewed and discussed.

General Administration

The Budget and Administration/ Personnel (B&A/P) Committee met two times this quarter. The Committee and staff recommended to the RTC the FY 06-07 budget amendments. The Committee also discussed the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail project. Staff continues to develop the necessary administrative and fiscal procedures to ensure that the RTC functions effectively and efficiently as an autonomous agency.

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).

RTC staff continued to meet with AMBAG staff to discuss the status of the regional travel demand model and continue coordinating the planned update of the model. Staff also participated in meetings of the regional Transit Model Enhancement Sub-Group to assess cost efficient efforts to enhance the regional models ability to project transit ridership (information not currently coded into the travel model).

With the assistance of its state and federal legislative assistants, staff continued to monitor and send comment letters on various state and federal legislative issues.

The Interagency Technical Advisory Committee (ITAC) met once this quarter. Discussions focused on Transportation Demand Management programs and Caltrans delegated authority related to NEPA environmental review.

113 Public Information

The RTC provided the media, local jurisdictions and chambers of commerce media releases regarding approval of state Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) funds and Proposition 1B funds for 22 local and regional projects and information about the availability of two newly updated resources: the County Bikeways Map and the Guide for Specialized Transportation. The RTC also placed display ads in the local papers to advertise the public hearing for the RTIP. In addition, the RTC continued to provide information/highlights about Commission actions at its monthly meetings.

RTC 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 community's 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. RTC staff work with Caltrans staff to be available to directly answer inquires during regular business hours.

During this quarter, staff worked with a consultant to develop and print the 2006 Annual Report highlighting the RTC's activities during the previous calendar year. Staff distributed the Annual Report to agency partners, community organizations, media sources, and notified e-news subscribers of its availability. Staff additionally developed a presentation folder to be used for meetings with legislators and other key groups and individuals.

RTC staff continued working on improving the organization and maintenance of the agency website. Tasks included: posting current Commission and Committee packets, agendas, minutes and highlights, press releases, meeting schedules and reports, and providing links to websites of transportation partners. Work on the remainder of the redesigned RTC site continues, employing a new and more user-friendly organizational structure. Staff also continued work on implementation on an internal website, or "Intranet," for use by staff.

The RTC expanded email notification of meeting agendas and information to realize even more savings on paper and printing/ mailing costs. This quarter the Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee and others receiving committee information were offered the option of electronic packet notification. A majority of those receiving agendas or packets opted to receive the electronic notice, saving staff time as well as printing and mailing costs.

115 Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Network

During this quarter, staff continued to work on the development of a scope of work and request for proposals (RFP) for consultant services for the preparation of a Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network Master Plan for the Santa Cruz County portion of the trail network. The draft RFP with the draft scope of work was presented to the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee (B&A/P) for review. Staff received direction regarding aspects of the project and RFP to develop further as well as direction to investigate with RTC legal counsel potential environmental review requirements. As directed by the B&A/P Committee, staff worked with RTC Counsel and appropriate technical personnel and consultants to investigate and address their concerns.

RTC staff continued to coordinate with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) on the completion of the master plan for the Monterey County portion of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network. Staff reviewed the draft master plan for Monterey County and provided comments.

177 Freeway Service Patrol (FSP)

RTC staff continued to administer the FSP Program including oversight of two existing FSP Program contracts. Staff monitored performance of the FSP service.

RTC finalized the contract for tow truck services on Highway 17 beginning in July 2007 and arranged for the new contractor to receive equipment previously provided by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

RTC staff investigated the use of new technology to respond to changes in data collection resources and improve FSP assist data collection. Staff attended a Statewide FSP Group meeting to discuss coordination of rotational tow calls with CHP and FSP program operations.

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

RTC staff worked with the Commission's call box service providers, including Comarco Wireless Technologies, Cingular Wireless and Connections Communications to maintain the system. RTC staff coordinated with Comarco Wireless Technologies and Caltrans to update the Geographic Positioning System coordinates of Santa Cruz County call boxes and map call box locations using Caltrans's Geographic Information Systems program. Staff tracked knocked down call boxes and facilitated reimbursement for call box repair as a result of knockdowns, as appropriate.

RTC staff monitored the phasing-in of the new call box equipment and worked with Comarco and Cingular (now AT&T) to facilitate transition of the call boxes from analogue to digital technology. Staff investigated and coordinated with AT&T and Comarco on solutions for call boxes not yet online using the new digital technology.

Staff continued to administer the Safe on 17 Program including reviewing invoices and administering the Safe on 17 CHP enforcement contract. Staff investigated possible strategies to continue to enhance safety on the corridor. The 2006 Safe on 17 Annual Report was completed and distributed.

179 Transportation Demand Management (TDM) - Commuter Services

Through employer contacts, the website, the 429-POOL phone line, emails and follow up contacts, Commute Solutions produced carpool matchlists and provided follow up services and referrals. Staff continued collaborating with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and its contractor, Parsons Brinckerhoff, to provide instant on-line carpool matching services to Santa Cruz County residents and commuters.

Commission staff continued working with employers, local and regional partner agencies including the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), the Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association (SCATMA), and the Pajaro Valley Transportation Management Association (PVTMA), the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, San Benito County Council of Governments and the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD) on general sustainable transportation outreach. In May, to recognize Clean Air Month, staff conducted a joint marketing promotion “Discover a New Commute” in conjunction with regional organizations. Staff also promoted the 20th Annual Bike Week events in Santa Cruz County including participating on a global warming/cooling solutions discussion panel. Staff continued to distribute relevant TDM materials.

Staff worked with the SCATMA to promote the Emergency Ride Home and Folding Bikes in Buses programs. Grants for both programs were secured from the MBUAPCD with SCCRTC public agency sponsorship. Program development and implementation are being conducted by the SCATMA with SCCRTC collaboration and oversight. Staff also worked with SCATMA to prepare for its transition to becoming fully incorporated into the Ecology Action organization on July 1, 2007.

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.

At Commission direction, staff continued working on a report analyzing current Transportation Demand Management (TDM) needs, strategies and services in the region. In addition to outlining current programs and their effectiveness, the report will also identify gaps in services and provide recommendations about how best to coordinate and implement TDM programs in the future.

Staff distributed the updated 2007 Santa Cruz County Bikeways Map to area bicycle shops, community agencies and transportation partners. Staff additionally notified

members of the public through news alerts regarding the availability of the new maps. Staff continued to coordinate with organizers of the Electric Bicycle Incentive Program and the Bike to Work/School Programs regarding program and funding administration and billing.

231 Transportation Monitoring and Evaluation

Field Data Services has conducted 56 traffic counts this quarter including 2 special counts for the County of Santa Cruz and 7-day counts on the UCSC campus. An agreement between TAMC and RTC regarding the regional coordinated traffic counts program to include Monterey County traffic counts in the RTC contract with Field Data Services will be renewed for the next fiscal year.

The 2006 Transportation Monitoring Report was completed this quarter and a draft will be presented to commissioners at the August RTC meeting.

411 Land Use/Transportation Coordination

Staff continued to monitor and review draft environmental documents for projects with potential transportation impacts. Staff prepared comments on the Initial Study for the Safeway Expansion Project and the Draft of Environmental Impact Report for La Bahia Project.

614 Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Program

The Bicycle Committee met two 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, proposed legislation, and local bike way issues on behalf of the Bicycle Committee.

As a follow-up to an effectiveness workshop held for the Bicycle Committee during the previous quarter, staff worked with newly formed subcommittees of the Bicycle Committee to better meet effectiveness and efficiency goals. Staff also continued to fill vacancies and expired seats.

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 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 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.

621 Specialized Transportation

During this quarter, the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E/D TAC) met three times. Discussion focused on the following: Article 8 TDA claim from the City of Santa Cruz on behalf of the Volunteer Center and Community Bridges, Central Coast Alliance for Health (local Medi-Cal administrator) transportation program changes, changes to the ParaCruz Eligibility and Appeals policies, projects included in the Draft Transportation Funding Plan under development by the Transportation Funding Task Force, election of the chair/vice chair, Pedestrian Access Report update, e-packet vs. printed packet (see Section 113 Public Information for details), review of taxicab ordinance consistency issues, review of the process for the development of the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan, service provider policies regarding cancellations and individuals with hearing impairments, and review of the 2006 Annual Report including the list of Unmet Needs. 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 staff continued to monitor projects to ensure consistency with the RTP. Staff also attended meetings on the new federal and state guidelines for RTPs, especially those related to green house gas emissions. Staff also met with AMBAG and other agencies in the region on development of the SAFETEA-LU mandated Public Participation Plan and Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. Staff also attended meetings of the Forecast Technical Advisory Committee for the development of the Regional Blueprint Plan. Staff reviewed and provided comments on a preliminary draft Public Participation Plan.

631 Transportation System Management

RTC staff monitored Caltrans' progress implementing new TSM elements. Staff continued to seek opportunities to coordinate transportation operations system (TOS) improvements with planned construction projects throughout the county. Caltrans completed the Highway 17 Laurel Curve Improvement project which includes some additional TOS.

RTC staff provided feedback to the Traffic Management Center on the usage and maintenance of Changeable Message Signs. Staff continued to investigate applications of TSM elements to relieve congestion in Santa Cruz County.

641 Transportation Improvement Program

This quarter the RTC approved amendments to the *2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)*, selecting projects to receive new Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) phase-out, and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) 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 that 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, including the Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) and the 2006 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Augmentation, and various state and federal regulations.

Transportation Funding Task Force

This project continues to be a major focus of staff time this quarter. This quarter the Task Force met 4 times to continue their negotiations on the development of a final Transportation Funding Plan. Tasks include planning/logistics for meetings, developing meeting materials and documenting task force actions, frequent email updates to the Task Force members and the public, and responding to requests for additional information. Regular planning meetings continued to be held with the convener, consultants and staff. Over 90% of the Task Force requested that the RTC implement a poll of likely voters to assist the Task Force with bridging gaps in their plan. RTC staff solicited qualifications from polling firms this quarter and will implement a contract and begin work next quarter with the goal of providing poll results to the Task Force when they meet again in the fall.

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. During this period, the RTC also worked with legislators as appropriate to help move the project forward.

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

684

Through this period the focus of activity has been on the environmental study team which has been working to complete the full range of required technical studies and initiating

the administrative draft environmental document to be delivered to Caltrans for review in a July/August timeframe.

Early in this period, the consultant team, working in a collaborative effort with Caltrans staff, completed the draft Traffic Operations Report (TOR) which is critical for both the environmental studies and the engineering design work. The engineering design team has been refining the design elements of the highway with input from the TOR particularly in guiding the design and configuration of any new freeway interchanges. The design elements of the respective highway alternatives: the HOV Lane Alternative and the Transportation System Management Alternative, include both standard and non-standard design elements in a manner that balances operational considerations, right-of-way, and environmental impacts.

There is no change in the project schedule that shows an anticipated completion date of the preliminary design/environmental document in late Fall 2009, or early 2010. In preparation for the release of the draft environmental documents, an outreach program is under development to provide broad based information on the project as well as focused discussion on specific issues and community interests. Part of this effort includes development of an updated project newsletter and creation of a speakers bureau to meet with community groups and organizations to provide project information.

Highway 1 Soquel Avenue to Morrissey Boulevard Auxiliary Lanes Project

The Project Approval/Environmental Documentation (PA/ED) phase of this project is now in full swing. This project is being closely coordinated with the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project and the Highway 1 HOV Lane project as a separate independent project to relieve traffic congestion through the busiest section of the Highway 1 corridor in Santa Cruz County.

With the allocation of \$16.2 million in Corridor Mobility Improvement Account funds, the project has been enhanced to include modification of the Highway 1 Morrissey Boulevard Interchange including reconstruction of the Morrissey Boulevard overcrossing of Highway 1 and realignment of the northbound ramps to improve motorist, bicyclist, and pedestrian safety. Both the Morrissey Boulevard Bridge and the La Fonda Avenue overcrossing will be replaced with structures that could accommodate widening of the highway to provide HOV lanes.

Based on preliminary costs estimates, funding is now complete for this project as a result of the 2006 RTIP Amendment approved in April, which allocated \$2.734 million in State Transportation Improvement Program funds combined with the \$2.9 million in Federal funds previously secured through Congressman Farr, and \$16.2 million in CMIA funds, for a total of slightly more than \$21.8 million. The Project Development Team has proposed to hold an Information Open House meeting on this project later this summer.

683 Highway 1 Planning

Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)

The HCA did not meet through this period.

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

Construction on this project is approximately 40% complete and is expected to be finished in 2009. The landscaping contract will begin immediately following the construction contract. This quarter contractor crews continued creek work required by the Branciforte/Carbonera Creek structures, retaining walls, and completed bridge pile foundations. In addition, traffic detours continue to address closed on/off ramps. Public outreach began this quarter in anticipation of the scheduled closure of the Branciforte Bridge in July 2007, these efforts have been suspended now that the bridgework has been postponed to Spring 2008.

The RTC is continuing to work with employers/employees, commuters, goods movement, emergency services, and neighbors to minimize traffic through the interchange by promoting transportation demand management practices.

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

All of the region's FY2006/07 Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds were exchanged for more flexible state-only RSTP Exchange funds. Staff released a call for projects to local jurisdictions interested in exchanging currently programmed RSTP funds for RSTP Exchange funds. The RTC amended the RTIP and FY07/08 Budget to include all the requests for RSTP Exchange funds that had been submitted by project sponsors.

Staff made payments to projects previously approved to receive RSTP Exchange funds and continued to monitor projects receiving those funds.

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