

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Rachel Moriconi and Grace Blakeslee, Transportation Planners
RE: Proposed Process for the *2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program*

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Issue a call for projects for \$5.4 million in projected new State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds;
 2. Accept information about regional and local transportation funding needs;
 3. Identify regional projects that should be evaluated for the 2008 RTIP;
 4. Indicate its intent to program up to \$1.48 million of those funds to projects in the Corralitos area that mitigate impacts created by the permanent closure of Amesti Road; and,
 5. Establish criteria to evaluate candidate projects.
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BACKGROUND

Under state transportation statutes established by SB 45 in 1998, state and federal funding for various types of transportation projects is programmed every two years through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The California Transportation Commission (CTC) is expected to adopt the Fund Estimate and Guidelines for the *2008 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)* on October 24, 2007. The 2008 STIP Fund Estimate projects anticipated revenues that will be available between FY2008/09-FY2012/13. The Regional Transportation Commission will nominate projects to receive its share of STIP funds through the *Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)*. After considering the RTIPs submitted statewide, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) will make the final determination on which projects are programmed to receive STIP funds.

DISCUSSION

Available Funds

According to the draft STIP Fund Estimate, scheduled for adoption by the CTC on October 24, 2007, **\$5.4 million in new STIP funds are available for programming to projects in Santa Cruz County** through Fiscal Year 2012/13. (The \$5.4 million projected for Santa Cruz County includes the return of funds that had been taken away from the region in 2006 when funds lapsed on three County of Santa Cruz projects.) Staff will report orally at this meeting on the final funding projections for Santa Cruz County. The Fund Estimate was negatively affected by recently enacted legislation which revised the distribution of Public Transportation Account (PTA) funds. Also, based on the Fund Estimate, it is likely that new

funds may not be available until 2012/13, some previously programmed projects could be delayed/pushed to later years of the STIP and PTA funds may only be available in later years. This will be partially determined by the mix of highway/ road and transit projects requested for programming throughout the state and the years that funds are requested.

Preliminary Needs Assessment

As outlined in the *Regional Transportation Plan* and as discussed at the Transportation Funding Task Force, there is a \$2 billion funding gap between transportation needs and anticipated funds available to our region. Staff recently met with project sponsors to review their existing projects and to identify some of their highest priority funding needs. A very preliminary list of projects that need funds is attached (Attachment 1). If the RTC issues a call for projects, project sponsors would meet with their boards and others to determine which projects to propose for RTC funds. Several of the projects included in Attachment 1 are currently programmed to receive funds from the RTC. Over \$6.0 million is required to fully fund the currently programmed projects. **Staff recommends that the RTC issue a call for projects to comprehensively evaluate the needs in the region including the funding shortfalls on existing projects.**

Staff will be evaluating funding needs on the following RTC-sponsored projects for the 2008 RTIP:

- Highway 1 HOV Lanes PA/ED
- Freeway Service Patrol
- Commute Solutions Rideshare Program
- Planning, Programming, & Monitoring
- Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network
- Pajaro Station

Staff recommends that the RTC identify any other regional priorities that should be evaluated for the 2008 RTIP.

Project Selection/Programming New Funds

The RTC will need to establish a process to select projects for these new funds. New projects selected will be included in the 2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) which serves as the RTC's proposal to the CTC for STIP funds. The RTC should consider RTP goals and policies, STIP Guideline's performance measures, regional and local needs, project delivery, need to fully fund projects, and prior funding commitments. **Staff recommends that the RTC direct staff to evaluate previously prioritized projects and any new projects proposed by project sponsors based on the following:**

- Safety – will the project reduce fatalities and injuries?
- Mobility – will the project reduce travel times, reduce congestion?
- Accessibility – does the project increase travel options and opportunities?
- Reliability of the system – does the project ensure on time trips and service?
- Productivity – does the project increase throughput?
- Air Quality/Environment/Global Warming – will project reduce green house gas emissions?
- System Preservation- does the project preserve the existing infrastructure and service?

- Deliverability - Is the project schedule realistic? Are there barriers to delivering this project on time?
- Fully funding for the project

Previously Identified Projects/Prior Funding Commitments

At prior meetings the RTC indicated its intent to program nearly \$3.9 million in STIP funds to lapsed funds and to projects previously proposed for funding as shown below:

1. Reprogram lapsed STIP funds to County projects (intent stated by RTC June 2006).
 - a. \$1.48 million STIP that lapsed on the Amesti Road Reconstruction Project to other projects in the Corralitos area which mitigate traffic impacts created by the permanent closure of Amesti Road;
 - b. \$95,000 STIP TE to the Phase 2 Wilder Ranch Bikeway Project and
 - c. \$195,000 STIP TE to the East Cliff Drive Bike/Pedestrian Path
2. Program 2008 STIP funds to projects initially approved for the 2006 RTIP Augmentation that the CTC did not include in the 2006 STIP due to a shortage of non-transit funds statewide (April 2007):
 - a. \$300,000 Freeway Service Patrol – for FY08/09-10/11
 - b. \$785,000 Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network – to match earmark
 - c. \$300,000 Rideshare Program – for FY09/10-10/11
 - d. \$216,000 Hwy 1 Widening/HOV Lane PA/ED – additional funds needed
 - e. \$500,000 Hwy 1/9 Intersection improvements

At its August 2007 meeting, the RTC decided to postpone the reconfirmation of any prior commitments, given the large number of unmet transportation needs in the region and uncertainties about the amount of new STIP funds. Notably, the County of Santa Cruz Public Works staff has recently indicated that the East Cliff project does not need additional funds and has suggested that due to delays to the Wilder Ranch project that the funds might be better utilized on a different project.

Staff recommends that the RTC indicate its intent to program a portion of the previously lapsed funds to projects in the Corralitos area that mitigate impacts created by the permanent closure of Amesti Road and to evaluate the remaining projects (lapsed and previously recommended for programming) in combination with other needs in the region.

Timeline

The general timeline for development and adoption of the 2008 RTIP and STIP is as follows:

- September/October 2007: Meetings with Project Sponsors on funding needs/updates on existing projects
- October 24, 2007: CTC adopts the 2008 STIP Guidelines and Fund Estimate
- **November 2007: RTC approves process for 2008 RTIP development, identify general priorities/funding commitments**
- November 19: Caltrans proposals due at the RTC
- **December 2007: Funding requests from local project sponsors due at RTC**
- January 2007: RTC/Committees review draft RTIP
- **February 2007: RTC Adopts 2008 RTIP – Public Hearing**

- February 19: RTIPs Due to CTC
- May 9: CTC Staff Recommendations released
- May 29: CTC Adopts 2008 STIP

SUMMARY

Approximately \$5.4 million in new State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) are available for programming. Staff recommends that the RTC issue a call for projects, identify RTC projects that should be evaluated for new funding, evaluate priorities based on performance, project delivery and ability to fully fund and indicate its intent to program a portion of these funds to projects in the Corralitos area.

Attachment 1: Preliminary List of High Priority Transportation Funding Needs in the Region

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