

# **Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission**

## **Proposed 2008 Federal Legislative Agenda**

- 1. Maximize Local Area Funding.** Support increased revenues for the Santa Cruz County region for transportation projects. Work with local legislators to obtain funding for highway improvements, rail corridor improvements, transit improvements, increased paratransit service, local streets and roads, and pedestrian/bicycle trails, including projects on Highway 1, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Trail, Pacific Station, and other Santa Cruz County projects. Oppose any efforts to reduce transportation funding to California or the region.
- 2. Advocate for timely passage of the annual transportation appropriations bills at the maximum amount provided in SAFETEA-LU:** Ensure that transportation planning funds are available to agencies throughout the year and are not withheld due to delays in enacting the annual federal budget or appropriations bills.
- 3. Maximize Flexible Transportation Funding.**
  - a) Support annual allocations at the maximum levels allowed for programs authorized by SAFETEA-LU in order to meet growing transportation needs for local streets and roads, improving transit, relieving traffic congestion, encouraging alternative modes of transportation, and meeting increased paratransit demands.
  - b) Oppose any efforts to reduce transportation funding to California or the region and support efforts to increase transit funding, particularly in small urbanized areas.
  - c) Support Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District's appropriation request(s) for transit projects, including paratransit van replacements, "smart" fare cards, and Pacific Station Redevelopment.
  - d) Support provisions that better integrate state and federal environmental laws.
  - e) Support federal assistance of bicycle and pedestrian programs.
- 4. Support Improved Elderly and Disabled Transportation.**
  - a) Support increased funding to Title III and VII of the Older Americans Act and Section 5310 program.
  - b) Require that all interstate transportation providers comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions, including wheelchair accessibility requirements.
  - c) Advocate for federal rule changes to reimburse non-emergency medical transportation through Medicare as a less costly alternative to ambulances.
- 5. Monitor the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission**

Advocate for the solvency of the federal Highway Trust Fund, which is expected to face a multi-billion dollar shortfall by 2009. (*Focus area for 2008*)
- 6. Support the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Scenic Trail** - Support efforts by Congressman Sam Farr to secure federal funds for planning and construction of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Scenic Trail.
- 7. Support Intercity Passenger Rail Services.** Support measures that will provide sufficient funding for AMTRAK and that will facilitate the shared use of tracks by passenger and freight rail.

**8. Support tax incentives for railroad track maintenance and repair**

Advocate for the extension of Section 45G Railroad Track Maintenance Credit that provides 50 percent tax credit to entities conducting qualified railroad track maintenance.

**9. Support Legislative and Administrative Proposals to Streamline the Process for Federally Funded Projects.** Support regulations to streamline the federal project delivery requirements (including cooperative agreements, pre-award audits, new disadvantaged business enterprise regulations and duplicative federal environmental review laws) while maintaining the substance of environmental laws, either through regulatory or statutory changes.

**10. Support Incentive Programs for Bicycle and Pedestrian Commuters and Funding for Improvements.** Support efforts to extend the transportation fringe benefits in the tax code to bicycle and pedestrian commuters as a strategy to decrease single-occupancy vehicle trips, similar to the transportation fringe benefit placed into law to reduce congestion, pollution, and wear and tear on roads.

**11. Assist Local Efforts to Secure Federal Emergency Management Agency Funds for storm damage repair projects.**

**12. Support Creation of a Federal/State Rail Capital Program.** Support creation of a combined Federal and State funding program for rail capital projects in which federal funds are used for 80% of the project's cost and state funds for the remaining 20% similar to highway capital projects.

- a) Encourage federal contributions to the California High Speed Rail project.

**13. SAFETEA-LU Reauthorization:** Coordinate with local entities, regional agencies, the State of California and the Federal Government on the Reauthorization of the Federal Surface Transportation Act. Support a bill which ensures a fair share of funding for California and Santa Cruz County.

**14. Climate Change:**

- a) Advocate for federal action on climate change and energy policy to ensure that any legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions be structured in such a way as to assist the region and the state in achieving greenhouse gas reduction and mobility goals, **not dilute state efforts.**
- b) Seek legislation to support the research and development of renewable energy sources that reduce the amount of emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels.