

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Second QUARTER FY 07-08 PROGRESS REPORT
October through December 2007

101 Work Program and Budget

During this quarter staff worked with an auditing firm to complete and submit to the State the required annual financial audit. Staff completed and the RTC approved a major amendment to the FY 07-08 budget and work program. Staff began preparing the FY 08-09 budget and work program.

During this quarter the RTC completed labor agreement negotiations with the Community of RTC Employees (CORE) and continued negotiations with the RTC Association of Middle Managers (RAMM). The RTC also implemented the labor agreement reached with CORE during this period.

General Administration

The Budget and Administration/ Personnel (B&A/P) Committee met twice this quarter. The Committee made recommendations regarding amendments to the FY07-08 Budget and Work Program and approved payments of the corresponding FY 07-08 additional and carryover allocations of TDA funds. The Committee also made recommendations that the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail RFP be circulated to sister agencies, other interested parties as well as Commissioners. The Committee also recommended the approval of a Time Bank Policy for RTC staff.

112 Plan Coordination

During this period, staff attended 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 participated in regional coordination meetings with staff from the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC).

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.

113 Public Information

The RTC continued to provide information and highlights regarding Commission actions at its monthly meetings through its website and the media.

RTC staff worked with the Transportation Funding Task Force to wrap up their Mobility Funding Plan and communicate the results to the public. Included in this effort were regular updates to the Task Force website, to the media and to the email list of interested individuals. As the RTC considers the Task Force's plan, they will continue to keep the public informed about the progress of the Expenditure Plan/Sales Tax Measure.

During this period the 2nd edition of the Highway 1 HOV Lanes Project Newsletter was published in English and Spanish and distributed to interested parties throughout the county. An invitation was included as an insert in the newsletter from RTC staff and consultants to provide presentations on the HOV Lanes project to interested neighborhood and community organizations throughout the county. The presentation is intended to provide an overview of the highway's history, including a description of the project alternatives, current and future travel times and speeds, project costs, information on the environmental analysis, potential for funding and a question and answer session with project team members.

The RTC's website was updated to include links to the newsletter, and the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project webpage was updated consistent with project activities over the past 9 months.

The public outreach and information campaign for the Highway 1/17 Interchange Merge Lanes project is being continuously implemented over the three-year construction timeframe of the project. Components of the outreach campaign include regular contact with the media, a hotline, and fielding calls from the public. Leaflets announcing the upcoming closure of the Pasatiempo Exit off-ramp due to construction were prepared and distributed.

The RTC continues to broadcast through Community TV its regular monthly meetings and place meeting agendas and packets for its meetings on the RTC website. Agendas for committee meetings and other information such as audit reports, approved budgets and work programs, and project information are also placed on the RTC website and maintained.

177 Freeway Service Patrol (FSP)

RTC continued to administer the FSP contract for Highway 17 and Highway 1. Staff monitored performance of the FSP service on both highways and tracked monthly program activity data. Staff initiated a quarterly report card for FSP drivers, which includes comparisons of total assists to like total assists on like beats in the Bay Area and other relevant performance measures. In coordination with the Monterey and Santa Barbara FSP Programs, RTC staff began negotiating a contract to implement new electronic data collection system for

FSP services, which will help to improve driver and staff productivity by minimizing paperwork and help to ensure that more, better and consistent data is available. Staff recorded actual program expenditures and developed a program budget for the FSP Program in FY08/09. Staff attended a FSP Statewide meeting to discuss common issues facing FSP programs statewide and to discuss FSP program coordination with CHP. Staff presented information to the SCMTD's Metro Advisory Board about the FSP Program and the use of drop sites. Staff met with the Monterey CHP Dispatch Center Supervisor to discuss FSP dispatch and call-in records. Staff updated the FSP portion of the RTC website to include the 2008 FSP Service schedule and maps of the areas covered by FSP service. Staff participated in one FSP Ride-a-long to observe the program first hand.

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

RTC staff worked with the RTC's call box service providers, including Comarco Wireless Technologies, AT&T and Connections Communications to maintain the system. Staff completed the call box inspections and finalized the call box upgrades contract with Comarco Wireless Technologies. Staff worked with Connections Communications, the call box private call answer center, to coordinate the distribution of detailed monthly call reports to the RTC and to ensure a smooth transition to new call answering software. Staff tracked knocked down call boxes and sought reimbursement for call box repair as a result of knockdowns, as appropriate. Staff continued to monitor monthly maintenance activities. Staff coordinated the production of new anti-theft stickers and TTY instructions to be adhered to call box poles and the inside of call box doors in Santa Cruz County.

Staff continued to administer the Safe on 17 Program including reviewing invoices and administering the Safe on 17 CHP enforcement contract. Staff distributed Safe on 17 brochures through existing CHP Programs. Staff monitored the progress of Caltrans' safety projects on Highway 17. Staff began to evaluate enhancements to the Safe on 17 Program for the future and seek opportunities to expand the number of CHP maximum enforcement days on Highway 17.

179 Transportation Demand Management (TDM) - Commuter Services

Through employer contacts, the website, the 429-POOL phone line, and email, 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 online carpool matching services to Santa Cruz County residents and commuters.

Commission staff continued working with employers and local, regional and state partner agencies including: Caltrans, the Association of Monterey Bay Area

Governments (AMBAG), Ecology Action (EA), 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) and local jurisdictions on general sustainable transportation outreach.

As the public agency sponsor for a grant from MBUAPCD, staff worked with EA to oversee, promote and administer the Emergency Ride Home program.

Staff provided assistance to various entities in their promotion of sustainable transportation modes including to the County Office of Education in planning for their new headquarters. Staff began updating presentation materials for use at upcoming outreach events and continued to distribute materials on alternative transportation modes.

Staff completed and delivered to the Commission a draft report assessing current Transportation Demand Management (TDM) needs, strategies and services in the region. In addition to outlining current programs and their effectiveness, the report identified gaps in services and provided recommendations about how best to coordinate and implement TDM programs in the future.

Staff continued to research the needs, costs, steps and potential funding required to establish a 511 traveler information system in the Monterey Bay Area.

Staff continued distributing Santa Cruz County Bikeways maps to area bicycle shops, community agencies and transportation partners. Staff continued to coordinate with the Community Traffic Safety Coalition, the Electric Bicycle Incentive Program, the Bike to Work/School Programs and the Folding Bikes in Buses Program, regarding program and funding administration and billing.

JB **231 Transportation Monitoring and Evaluation**

National Data Services has conducted 12 traffic counts this quarter. The RTC approved amending the agreement with National Data Service changing the scope of work to include GIS data, increasing the amount of compensation and extending the contract through the current fiscal year. The RTC also approved amending the agreement between TAMC and RTC regarding the regional coordinated traffic counts program to extend the contract and increase the compensated amount for Monterey County traffic counts conducted by National Data Services.

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 New Leaf Community Market Project and the Initial Study for the Murray Street Bridge Seismic Retrofit Project. Staff monitored activities at the State level related to Blueprint Planning and reported relevant activities to the RTC.

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 regarding bike way facility issues on behalf of the Bicycle Committee. Staff worked with subcommittees of the Bicycle Committee to better meet effectiveness and efficiency goals. Staff also continued to recruit for committee vacancies.

The RTC agreed to co-sponsor a Federal Highway Administration designed workshop entitled "Designing for Pedestrian Safety." RTC staff handled registration and logistical arrangements for the free workshop to be held January 31st and February 1st in Watsonville, CA.

RTC staff, along with Bicycle Committee members, assisted the City of Santa Cruz with an application to the League of American Bicyclists for their Bicycle Friendly Community Award program. The City of Santa Cruz was awarded a Silver Level designation and staff assisted in preparations by providing photographs of RTC funded projects within the City of Santa Cruz and information about relevant Bicycle Committee activities, for the award ceremony to be held in January, 2008.

Staff attended monthly meetings of the Community Traffic Safety Coalition, coordinating with this group on issues relating to bicycle and pedestrian safety.

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.

RTC staff continued to coordinate with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) on the Master Planning process for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary

Scenic Trail (MBSST) Network. As directed by the Budget and Administration/Personnel (B&A/P) Committee earlier this year, staff worked with the RTC Counsel and appropriate technical consultants to bring a report back to the B&A/P Committee in December recommending that the draft Request for Proposal be modified to include preparation of an environmental review document for the MBSST Network Master Plan.

621 Specialized Transportation

The Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E/D TAC) met twice this quarter. Meeting topics included: the final list of Unmet Transit and Paratransit Needs, an update about taxi regulations and fares, input into the Coordinated Human Services Plan, the RTC's federal and state legislative agenda, highlights of the new Mobility Outreach Program to be implemented with a Caltrans Environmental Justice grant, and an endorsement of the Adult/Aging Community Services Summit.

Also this quarter, staff worked on the second version of the Administrative Draft of the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan which will identify existing services, demographics, unmet specialized transportation needs, potential services and priorities. A meeting was held with other specialized transportation and social service providers to solicit input into the plan.

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 the meeting - Bay Area on the Move: First step in developing a vision for the Bay Area RTP update and participated in the RTP Guidelines Amendment Workgroup.

631 Transportation System Management

Staff continued to investigate applications of TSM elements to relieve congestion in Santa Cruz County and to research benefits of TSM elements implemented throughout the nation while noting the lessons learned. RTC staff monitored Caltrans' progress implementing new TSM elements. Staff investigated the role of ITS in implementing a 511 program.

Staff worked actively with the Central Coast ITS Coordinating Group to finalize the Central Coast Intelligent Transportation System Implementation Plan and related materials. Staff presented relevant materials to the ITAC.

641 Transportation Improvement Program

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), the 2008 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and various state and federal regulations. Staff initiated the work to produce the 2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) to allocate approximately \$5.5 million to regional and local projects.

Transportation Funding Task Force

Two Task Force meetings were held this quarter, with the final meeting culminating in a Mobility Funding Plan endorsed by 72% of Task Force members present and voting. This plan will be considered by the RTC over the next few months as they determine whether to place the measure on the ballot. Both meetings entailed huge amounts of preparation, logistical, analysis, and follow-up work by RTC 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. During this period, RTC continued to work with consultants to complete due diligence work, including appraisals of the property, and met with California Transportation Commission (CTC) staff regarding an allocation request for the acquisition and required accompanying information.

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

684

In October, the RTC recommended a 45-day public review period for the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, to be released in Summer 2008. This timeframe is consistent with guidance provided by Caltrans, who serves as Lead Agency for environmental review. Caltrans advised that the review period not be longer than 60 days, except in unusual circumstances.

In October, the RTC authorized release of a Request for Qualifications to secure an On-Call Right of Way consultant to perform right of way data research and

valuation studies for inclusion in the Project Report accompanying the Environmental Document. Other activities will include efforts to secure Rights of Entry for archeological investigations once a preferred project alternative has been selected, participation in public meetings, and coordination with Caltrans and local agencies along the corridor on issues related to right of way. A draft scope of work and budget for the recommended consultant firm will be presented to the RTC for consideration in the next reporting period.

In November, the RTC took action to amend the Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans to extend the duration of the PA/ED phase of the project consistent with the current project schedule. The Cooperative Agreement specifies the role and responsibility of RTC and Caltrans through the PA/ED process.

In November the RTC also authorized staff to use Caltrans' list of pre-qualified Value Analysis (VA) consultants to evaluate and select a consultant firm to conduct a VA study for the Highway 1 HOV Lanes project. VA studies are mandated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for all projects on the federal-aid system with a total project cost equal to or greater than \$25 million. The intent of the VA study is to improve the overall quality of the project, encourage innovation, and minimize life-cycle costs. Staff will return to the RTC with a recommended consultant and a proposed contract with scope of services and maximum contract amount before work begins.

In December, the project consultants gave a Quarterly Progress Report to the RTC. The highlight of the current reporting period was the submittal of the administrative draft environmental documents and engineering plans to Caltrans for review, and the corresponding comments received from Caltrans. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has not yet issued methodology for evaluating greenhouse gases at a project level. However, the environmental document will address this issue through a qualitative analytical approach, in conformance with Caltrans' guidance.

The RTC has received comments from Caltrans engineers that the proposed design for the reconstruction of the Soquel Interchange is unacceptable. Multiple geometric configurations for the Soquel Interchange have been developed and reviewed with the County and Caltrans staff. The most recent option provides continued access to Commercial Way from the Highway 1 northbound off-ramp, but impacts parking spaces at the retail site immediately adjacent to the ramp. The consultant team, RTC and County staff are preparing material to appeal Caltrans decision.

Highway 1 Soquel Avenue to Morrissey Boulevard Auxiliary Lanes Project

The highlight of the current reporting period is the engineering and project management work associated with proposed modification of the Morrissey

Boulevard Interchange as part of the Auxiliary Lanes Project. The construction funding received from the Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) program allowed staff to explore the potential of modifying the northbound side of the Morrissey Boulevard Interchange. The goal of the expanded scope of improvements was to improve existing conditions for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

As a result of meetings with staff of the City of Santa Cruz, the City Transportation Commission, and ultimately, the Santa Cruz City Council, a determination was made to not change the current design of the northbound ramps, but that the project include sidewalks at select locations on arterial streets fronting the north side of the Morrissey Boulevard Interchange. These improvements will be considered as part of the Project Report/Environmental Documentation (PA/ED) phase of the project that is now fully underway and coordinated with the Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project and the Highway 1 HOV Lanes Project, as a separate stand alone project.

With resolution of the scope of the project, the RTC authorized a new aerial mapping task to advance the project design process and meet the aggressive project delivery date. By completing this task now, the engineering work completed as part of the PA/ED process can be directly applied to the topographic mapping, thereby accelerating the project schedule.

683 Highway Planning

Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)

The HCA met in December to receive the Quarterly Progress Report on the Highway 1 projects and review some engineering design details. The next meeting of the HCA is tentatively scheduled for the Spring of 2008.

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

A Project Development Team meeting was held this quarter to review project progress and construction issues. Construction on this project is approximately 60% complete and is expected to be finished in 2009. The landscaping contract will begin immediately following the construction contract. Work with Caltrans Landscape staff is proceeding to ensure that if construction is completed early, the landscape delivery project will be ready to proceed without a time lapse.

The Branciforte bridge will be closed for nine months while the old bridge is demolished and a new bridge built. In addition, the Pasatiempo exit from northbound Highway 17 will be closed for two months. RTC staff is working with Caltrans and the City of Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency staff to ensure that the public is aware of the traffic impacts of these closures.

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.

Corridor System Management Plan for the State Route 1 Corridor

As a requirement of receiving the Congestion Management Improvement Account (CMIA) funds for the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes Project, the RTC must participate with Caltrans in the development and implementation of a *Corridor System Management Plan*. The purpose of this plan is to monitor and strive to maintain the level of congestion relief attained by CMIA funded projects. This planning effort will be conducted on a corridor level in partnership with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, which received CMIA funding for the Salinas Road Interchange project.

Through this reporting period the RTC, TAMC, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), and Caltrans staff finalized and executed a Charter Agreement to formalize the working relationship that will include local agencies and modal operators (i.e. Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District).

Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association/Ecology Action

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.

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