

---Public Hearing Scheduled for 9:30 a.m.---

AGENDA: February 7, 2008

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Rachel Moriconi, Transportation Planner
RE: Adoption of the *2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program*

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Review the proposal for programming \$5.5 million in projected new 2008 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds (Attachment 2) and proposed amendments to previously programmed projects (Attachment 3);
 2. Consider recommendations made by the RTC's advisory committees;
 3. Hold a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed amendments and consider any written comments received (to be distributed at the meeting);
 4. Adopt a resolution (Attachment 1) adopting the *2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program* (RTIP) to program \$5.5 million in projected STIP funds and amend previously programmed projects;
 5. Make new funding for the Commute Solutions Rideshare Program contingent on RTC approval of the work program adopted with the annual RTC budget;
 6. Indicate its intent to reprogram some of the Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds designated to the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project Approval/Environmental Document (PA/ED) to other projects if not all of those funds are needed for that phase of the project; and
 7. Request that the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) and California Transportation Commission (CTC) incorporate these amendments into the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), respectively.
-

BACKGROUND

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is the agency responsible for selecting projects to receive a variety of state and federal funds. The *Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)* for Santa Cruz County is a list of projects which have been selected by the RTC to receive funds from a variety of state and federal programs over the next five years. The RTIP primarily serves two purposes: 1) as a tool to assist in monitoring the delivery of state and

federally-funded regional transportation projects; and 2) the RTC's proposal to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for the region's share of funds from the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The RTIP is typically adopted every two years. Interim amendments are made as needed.

Based on the 2008 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Fund Estimate, adopted by the CTC in October 2007, approximately \$5.5 million is available for programming in Santa Cruz County. STIP funds are available for a wide range of projects, including highway projects, roadway rehabilitation, safety improvements, rideshare programs, bicycle projects, sidewalks, enhancement activities and transit capital projects. The Regional Transportation Commission nominates projects to receive Santa Cruz County's share of STIP funds through the *Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)*. After considering the RTIPs submitted statewide, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) makes the final determination on which projects are programmed to receive STIP funds. The 2008 RTIP is due to the CTC on February 19, 2008. The CTC staff recommendations are scheduled for release on May 9, with CTC adoption of the final program of projects on May 29, 2008.

Depending on proposals submitted statewide, new funds may not be available until 2012/13, and some previously programmed projects could be delayed/pushed to later years of the STIP.

DISCUSSION

Recommendations for STIP Funds

Based on criteria established at the November 1, 2007 meeting, staff evaluated funding requests received for 7 regionally significant and 8 local projects. **Staff recommends, upon completion of the scheduled public hearing, that the RTC adopt a resolution (Attachment 1) programming \$5.47 million in STIP funds to ten projects (Attachment 2).**

Taking into consideration both regional and local needs, priorities identified by local jurisdictions, and the RTC's stated intent to program up to \$1.48 million to the Corralitos area, **staff recommends programming the \$5.47 million in projected STIP funds to the following projects:**

- **Highway 1/HOV Lanes Project Approval/Environmental Document – \$1,375,000** to address cost increases due to increased scope and unforeseen delays (see separate staff report)
- **Freeway Service Patrol - \$500,000** to match state funds and cover five years of the current service
- **Regional Rideshare Program - \$300,000** to cover two years of the program, which does not have funding beyond June 2009.
- **Local Jurisdictions projects:**
 - County of Santa Cruz – projects aimed at mitigating Amesti Road closure
 - **Corralitos Road Turn Lane - \$500,000**
 - **Varni Road Rehabilitation - \$980,000**
 - County of Santa Cruz : **Carlton Road Overlay - \$854,000**
 - City of Capitola: **38th Avenue Rehab and Sidewalks - \$135,000**
 - City of Santa Cruz: **San Lorenzo River Bike/Ped Bridge - \$367,000**
 - City of Scotts Valley: **Bean Creek Road Rehab - \$135,000**
 - City of Watsonville: **Freedom Boulevard Rehab - \$327,000**

Information on recommended funding levels, funding needs/requests, and descriptions of the projects evaluated for the *2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)* are provided in Attachment 4. Recommended regional projects primarily improve the transportation system's performance in the areas of mobility, productivity and reliability of the system. Local jurisdictions' projects focus primarily on preserving the existing transportation system, as well as safety, mobility and accessibility for bicyclists and pedestrians. As requested by the ITAC, staff took every effort to limit the amount of funding recommended for regionally-significant projects in order to maximize funding available for local jurisdictions.

Other Project Amendments

In addition to programming STIP funds to various projects, **staff and project sponsors recommend that the RTC amend the RTIP to reflect schedule and other changes to several previously programmed projects (Attachment 3)**. These amendments include shifting funds from one project to another, as well as changes to project scope, schedule, or matching funds. The RTIP must be amended to reflect project changes in order to ensure federal and state funds are retained and accessible to project sponsors. Notably, the amendment proposed for the Graham Hill Safety Project sponsored by the County of Santa Cruz has changed since the January 10, 2008 RTC meeting. Attachment 4 is the revised project listings for all projects being carried over into the 2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).

Committee Recommendations

The Interagency Technical Advisory Committee recommends that the RTC approve the staff recommendation and that if the City of Santa Cruz does not need the STIP funds for the San Lorenzo River Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge project that the RTC redirect those funds to the Highway 1/9 Intersection project. Staff concurs with this recommendation. The staff recommendation reflects the ITAC's request that the RTC distribute the balance of 2008 STIP funds available, after funds are distributed to the Corralitos area and to regional projects, to local jurisdictions based on population (rather than competitive basis), with a reasonable minimum amount given to the smaller cities.

The Bicycle Committee specifically supports projects that include bicycle elements, including the San Lorenzo River Bike/Pedestrian Bridge and Freedom Boulevard projects, and recommends that other local projects be expanded to include bicycle lanes. Bicycle facilities have since been added to the scope of the Bean Creek Road project. Existing bicycle lanes will be preserved on Corralitos Road. Given the additional right-of-way and full structural section required for adding bicycle lanes on Carlton and Varni, the County indicated they will consider adding bicycle lanes on those roads if additional funds become available before the projects go to construction. Staff did not receive any comments from the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee.

Updates on Highway 1 Projects Funding Proposals

At the January 2008 RTC meeting staff reported that Caltrans had requested an additional \$273,000 for right-of-way support on the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes project. Since that meeting Caltrans reevaluated funding needs for the project and determined that the additional funds are not needed for the project as a whole because less funding is needed for right-of-way capital than was originally programmed. Therefore, Caltrans and staff recommend that a portion of funds previously programmed to this project be shifted from right-of-way capital for Project

Approval/Environmental Document (PA/ED) and Caltrans right-of-way support. The revised staff recommendation distributes the \$273,000 previously recommended for this project to the local jurisdictions' projects.

As discussed in a separate staff report, RTC staff reevaluated the funding needs for the PA/ED phase of the Highway 1 HOV Lanes project and has determined that it is prudent to program an additional \$1.375 million to this phase of the project. Staff and the consultant will work diligently to minimize expenses on the project and if all of the funds programmed to the PA/ED phase are not needed, the RTC can shift those funds to other projects once the PA/ED phase is completed. Since the project has both STIP and RSTP funds and RSTP funds are more flexible, face no timely use of funds restrictions, and are more desirable to project sponsors, especially local jurisdictions, staff will utilize the STIP funds first. Therefore any potential balance of funds would be in the form of RSTP. Unlike with STIP funds, the RTC could amend the RTIP to shift the RSTP funds to other projects at any time.

Public Hearing on the 2008 RTIP Amendment

Consistent with RTC Rules and Regulations, prior to adoption of the RTIP, **a public hearing has been scheduled for 9:30 a.m.** to receive public input on the proposed program of projects and other amendments. A news release on the hearing was sent out to local media and the hearing was advertised in the Santa Cruz Sentinel and Register-Pajaronian.

Potential Impact of the Multi-Billion Dollar State Budget Deficit

Though the STIP Fund Estimate identifies approximately \$5.5 million for programming in Santa Cruz County through FY2012/13, the availability of these funds could be affected by several factors. For example, the Fund Estimate assumes that funds designated to transportation will not be diverted to the State General Fund or other programs. However, in light of the projected \$10-15 billion State Budget Deficit it is possible that transportation funds will be diverted away from the STIP. If this happens the CTC will not be able to allocate funds to projects in the years they are programmed, which could affect project schedules. Working to minimize the impacts of State Budget shortfalls on transportation is a key element of the RTC's Legislative Agenda.

SUMMARY

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) has identified \$5.5 million in State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds available for programming to projects in Santa Cruz County through FY2012/13. The RTC submits its proposal for programming its share of STIP funds through the *Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)*. Staff recommends that, following a public hearing, the RTC adopt a resolution, designating projects to receive these funds (Attachment 2) and amending existing projects (Attachment 3).

Attachments

1. Resolution
2. Projects Considered and Staff Recommendations for STIP Funds
3. Proposed Amendments to Existing Projects
4. RTIP Project Maps and Listings