

**TO:** Regional Transportation Commission  
**FROM:** Tegan Speiser, Sr. Transportation Planner  
**RE:** AB2766 Grant Applications Update

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Staff recommends that the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission approve a resolution (Attachment 1) authorizing the RTC staff to submit AB2766 grant funding requests as previously approved at the May 1, 2008, meeting with the following amendments:
    - a. Increase AB2766 grant funding requests to the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (Air District) to \$120,000 for the Carpool Incentive Program and to \$50,000 for the Shop-and-Ride Program and to submit these as two separate project proposals; and,
    - b. Remove the Bicycle Signage Program from the Bicycle Signage and Bikes Secure Program grant application and apply for AB2766 grant funding for the Bikes Secure Bicycle Parking Program in an amount not to exceed \$30,000;
  2. Authorize the Executive Director to enter into the necessary agreements with the Air District in the event that the applications are successful.
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## **BACKGROUND**

At your May 1, 2008 meeting, the Commission authorized RTC staff to prepare and submit grant proposals for the current funding cycle of AB2766 grants awarded by the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (Air District). Grant proposals approved for submission included funding requests for the Bikes Secure Parking and Signage program, a new carpool incentive program including an innovative shop and ride commuter parking program and public agency sponsorship of a grant from Ecology Action for a countywide emergency ride home program. All of these proposals are in the process of being developed and submitted to the Air District by the June 2, 2008 deadline.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Separate Proposals**

In the course of developing the proposals, it became clear to RTC staff that both the carpool incentive and shop-and-ride programs would benefit from being treated as separate, complementary proposals rather than to be submitted as a single project. This is due largely to the fact that the Shop-and-Ride concept is a new one for this region and would make an excellent candidate for an Air District Demonstration Project. Demonstration projects typically

show facilities, equipment, methods or procedures that enable motor vehicle emissions reductions, even if these reductions cannot be reliably estimated. On the other hand, vehicle emission reductions are expected to be directly reduced by implementing a carpool incentive program and can be reasonably estimated over the lifetime of the project. Consequently this project could be submitted under the Direct Motor Vehicle Emissions Reduction Projects category. These projects compete better under the respective project categories outlined above rather than when combined.

### **Modified Requests**

After crunching the numbers, staff also found that initial projections severely underestimated the cost of implementing both the carpool incentive and shop-and-ride programs.

#### *Carpool Incentive Program*

First, twice as many commuters as initially thought would need to establish carpools under the carpool incentive program for it to score well in terms of the project's cost effectiveness in reducing vehicle emissions. This higher number of participants translates into higher incentive costs in terms of the program budget. In addition to the initial target population of work-bound commuters, staff has also added a component of the project to target forming new carpools among parents driving their school-age children to school. The addition of this component reaches a greater number of single occupancy vehicle drivers, but also increases program costs to develop another aspect of the program. The carpool incentive program grant request would be increased to \$120,000 (from \$60,000) over a two year period.

#### *Shop and Ride Program*

Ridesharing requires that commuters have a safe, inexpensive location to meet their carpool and leave their vehicles during the workday. Typical parking locations include public streets, designated park and ride facilities such as at transit centers and leased third party facilities such as churches and shopping centers. The proposed Shop-and-Ride program would add a new element to shopping center parking. In exchange for allowing commuters to park in a shopping center lot during the workday, a commuter would agree to purchase a gift card each month worth a set denomination negotiated in advance with the retailer. Initially, staff proposed developing a very modest program. However, in light of high gas prices and increasing demand for commuter parking facilities, a more comprehensive program would provide the RTC and Air District with a better analysis of the viability of such arrangements with local shopping centers and retailers. A more complete program would also provide some resources for minor improvements such as signage and/or lighting. Staff recommends increasing the Shop-and-Ride grant request to \$50,000 (from \$15,000) over a two year period.

**Staff recommends that the RTC approve a resolution (Attachment 1) authorizing the submittal of separate grant applications to the Air District for the Carpool Incentive Program and Shop-and-Ride Program and increasing the grant application to the Air District for the Carpool Incentive Program to \$120,000 and to \$50,000 for the Shop-and-Ride Program.**

#### *Bikes Secure Bicycle Parking Subsidy Program*

In response to feedback from the Air District staff, RTC staff recommends removing the bicycle signage aspect of the proposed AB2766 grant application approved by the Commission on May 1, 2008 while retaining the bike parking subsidy component of the proposed request. Air District

staff indicated that they are not considering Class III bicycle facility projects for funding at this time. Class III bicycle facilities typically refer to preferred routes for bicyclists in locations typically shared with cars and identified by signs. The proposed Bicycle Signage Program falls within the Class III bicycle facility category of projects. Based on the positive feedback received about the proposed Bicycle Signage Project from stakeholders during the proposal's development, RTC staff is aware of the desire for this program, or similar program, and will pursue other grant opportunities for this program in the future. Meanwhile, the total AB2766 funds requested for bicycle facilities will be reduced to reflect the removal of the bicycle route signage program element. **Staff recommends that the RTC approve a resolution (Attachment 1) authorizing the staff to modify the previously proposed grant application and apply for AB2766 grant funding for the Bikes Secure Bicycle Parking program in an amount not to exceed \$30,000.**

## **SUMMARY**

At its May meeting, the RTC approved submitting projects for AB2766 funding from the Air District. In the process of developing the grant proposals, staff determined that separating the carpool incentive program and the shop-and ride program would be beneficial and that higher levels of funding would make the projects more effective and successful. In addition, staff is recommending removing the Bicycle Signage Program from the proposed AB2766 application for bicycle facilities and pursuing an AB2766 grant for the Bikes Secure Bicycle Parking program only. Proposed changes to the grant funding requests have been provided in this report for the Commission's consideration.

Attachment 1: Resolution Authorizing Submission of AB2766 Grant Proposals

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