

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Fourth QUARTER FY 07-08 PROGRESS REPORT
April through June 2008

101 Work Program and Budget

Staff continued to work with the Caltrans Audits and Investigations Division to finalize the FY07-08 RTC Indirect Cost Allocation Plan. During this quarter staff received and reviewed the proposals for an auditing firm to conduct the required annual financial audit; and the Commission approved the selection and awarded the contract. Staff completed and the RTC approved three amendments to the FY 07-08 budget and work program. Staff also completed and the RTC approved the first amendment to the FY 08-09 budget and work program which were included in the region's overall work program. Staff participated in the annual Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) coordination meeting where feedback on the work program was provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Caltrans.

General Administration

The Budget and Administration/ Personnel (B&A/P) Committee met twice this quarter. The Committee made recommendations regarding amendments to the FY 07-08 budget and work program that included recommendations to address the Transportation Development Act (TDA) revenues shortfall, and amendments to the FY 08-09 budget and work program to address the impacts of the TDA shortfall in FY 08-09. The Committee also reviewed and made recommendations on the comments received on the Draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Network Master Plan and Program Level Environmental Review and recommended that the RTC approve the release to consultants of the draft RFP.

112 Plan Coordination

During this period, staff attended meetings of the California Transportation Commission (CTC), the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) Group, the Self Help Counties Coalition, 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 and keep the RTC informed of legislative activity with reports from staff and the legislative assistants.

113 Public Information

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

During this period the RTC staff gave 13 presentations as part of the RTC Speaker's Bureau program to provide information about the RTC's work as the area's transportation planning agency and its major projects. Presentations were made to a wide spectrum of agencies, community, and social services organizations, in addition to the cities of Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville. Additional presentations are scheduled through August, prior to the release of the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lanes draft environmental documents for public comment.

In June the RTC approved the proposed approach and format of the public hearings for the draft environmental documents for the Highway 1 projects, described below in sections 683 and 684.

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. This quarter, outreach work focused on the Branciforte Bridge closure, Emeline underpass closure, Emeline off ramp completion and traffic detours.

During this period, the RTC continued preparations for a major redesign of the Commission's websites. Staff received and reviewed proposals which were submitted after a Request for Proposals was circulated. A selection team made up of staff and an outside agency representative interviewed consultant teams for website design and programming services, selected a final consultant team, and verified

references. Staff began the contract development process and prepared for an August project launch date.

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. The contract for FSP services on Highway 1 was amended to extend service an additional year. The FSP service specifically deployed to address Highway 1/17 construction congestion was scheduled and implemented. Staff monitored performance of the FSP service on both highways and tracked monthly program activity data. A new electronic data collection system was finalized and implemented during this quarter. Drivers were trained how to use the new system and staff worked with the contractor to make modifications to the system as needed. The FSP Operator's Manual was updated to reflect program changes and staff worked with the contractor to ensure that new state rules and requirements were being adhered to. A new Santa Cruz County specific FSP brochure was finalized and printed. Staff attended the Statewide FSP meeting to discuss statewide issues, the impact of increasing fuel prices on FSP programs and CHP staffing needs for the FSP program.

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 amended the contract with Comarco Wireless Technologies to transfer the contract to a new company, Case Systems Inc. Staff met with the Santa Cruz County Call Box Program AT&T account representatives to resolve billing issues and to develop solutions to inadequate digital cellular service to some call boxes. Staff worked with Comarco Wireless Technologies to identify improvements needed to specific call box sites to ensure compliance with Caltrans standards and improve accessibility.

Staff continued to administer the Safe on 17 Program including reviewing invoices and administering the Safe on 17 CHP enforcement contract. Staff completed the 2007 Safe on 17 Annual Report. Staff worked with partner agencies to continue the extra CHP enforcement on Highway 17 through 2011. Staff worked with Caltrans to replace the decal on the Highway 17 Safety Corridor Sign.

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. The volume of inquiries and carpool matchlist requests increased significantly during the last quarter. Staff continued collaborating with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and its contractor, Parsons Brinckerhoff, to provide instant web-based 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. Two new grant proposals were written to fund innovative TDM incentive programs that would encourage people to carpool and create a new source of park and ride facilities.

Staff provided information and assistance and distributed materials to various entities in their promotion of sustainable transportation modes. Staff facilitated carpool matching promotions at two large employers.

Staff began the process of implementing recommendations from the TDM analysis approved by the Commission in March.

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 distributed information to commuters using local park and ride facilities to help mitigate the impacts of highway construction and advise them of their travel choices.

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 Bike to Work/School Programs and the Folding Bikes in Buses Program, regarding program and funding administration and billing.

231 Transportation Monitoring and Evaluation

National Data Services, conducted 35 traffic counts on behalf of the RTC this quarter. The subcontract with Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) was extended.

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 Negative Declaration for a mixed-use project at 17th and Brommer in Santa Cruz County, the Notice of Preparation for a new Jennings Business Park in Watsonville, the Notice of Preparation for the City of Scott Valley Gateway South Retail Project, the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Santa Cruz Medical Facility in Watsonville, the Initial Study for the Highway 17 Santa's Village Road Guardrail Project and the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Liebrant Avenue Hotel Project in the City of Santa Cruz.

Staff participated in the first Santa Cruz County Blueprint Scoping Meeting with representatives from local jurisdictions planning departments sponsored by AMBAG to begin to define what blueprint planning could mean to Santa Cruz County.

614 Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Program

The Bicycle Committee met twice 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 and received three applications for voting and alternate seats representing the City of Watsonville and an alternate seat representing Supervisorial District 5.

RTC staff, along with Bicycle Committee members, assisted the City of Santa Cruz with an update of the City of Santa Cruz Bicycle Plan scheduled for completion by December, 2008. Staff worked to ensure compliance with the Streets and Highways Code requirements for the Plan and also to facilitate incorporation of the University of California, Santa Cruz update of its Bicycle Plan as part and parcel of the City of Santa Cruz plan.

Staff began the yearly compilation of new bikeway mileage for the previous calendar year from each jurisdiction for inclusion in the Transportation Monitoring Report and the Community Assessment Project of the United Way.

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. As program funds have been depleted, staff prepared a grant application for continued funding for the program through this year's Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District AB2766 funding program.

Staff continued promotion and implementation of the 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, staff

circulated for review the modified draft Request for Proposal for the MBSST Network Master Plan and Environmental Review. Staff received input on the RFP and addressed comments in a revised draft RFP which was presented to the B&A/P Committee. The B&A/P recommended that staff prepare a final draft RFP for review by the RTC and release to consultants in August.

621 Specialized Transportation

The Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E/D TAC) met three times this quarter. Meeting topics included: input into accessible components of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail plan proposal; input into the Coordinated Human Services Plan; development of the committee's Annual Report including the first draft of the Unmet Specialized Transportation Needs list; changes to the Same Day Service policy for ParaCruz; follow up actions from the Adult/Aging Community Services Solutions Summit; Transportation Development Act funding recommendations for the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, Community Bridges and the Volunteer Center; recommendations on the METRO's Section 5311 grant application; positions on Proposition 98 and 99; Local Review Committee recommendations for the Section 5310 grant applications; recommendations on the Transportation Development Act claim from the City of Watsonville for curb cuts; letters of support for local Section 5316 and 5317 grant applications; input on the fixed route discounted bus pas policy for seniors and people with disabilities; and providing quarterly reports/requested information from the service providers.

Also this quarter, staff worked with AMBAG to finalize the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan which identifies existing services, demographics, unmet specialized transportation needs, potential services and priorities.

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 monitored Air Resources Board, legislative, and California Transportation Commission (CTC) proposals for expanding the focus of RTPs to address global warming.

631 Transportation System Management

Staff continued to investigate applications of TSM elements to relieve congestion in Santa Cruz County and the potential to integrate TSM improvements with data collection and dissemination needs. RTC staff monitored Caltrans' progress implementing new TSM elements. Staff acted as a liaison between Caltrans District 4 and District 5 to address maintenance of the Santa Cruz County traffic operation system equipment. Staff visited the Regional Traffic Management Center in Oakland to observe how information is shared between stakeholders. Staff met with the Monterey CHP Dispatch supervisor to discuss communications with partner agencies.

641 Transportation Improvement Program

Staff worked with project sponsors, Caltrans, Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to implement 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 reviewed and provided significant input on AMBAG's Draft 2008 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP). Staff met with CTC and Caltrans staff to advocate for the inclusion of RTC-selected projects in the 2008 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

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.

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. The RTC approved budget and contract amendments to help complete the due diligence work. RTC staff worked with California Transportation Commission (CTC) staff and Caltrans to complete all of the forms and provide all of the information required for the uniform transit applications for \$500,000 in Proposition 116 funds to complete the due diligence work. The CTC approved the uniform transit application and staff began working on the necessary funding agreements.

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

684

Through this period the project team has been focusing on resolving outstanding design issues along the corridor so that all engineering plans and environmental documents can be updated. A potential resolution to the Soquel Avenue interchange has been proposed and is currently being analyzed.

Delays encountered in resolving engineering issues on the HOV Lane project and the emphasis on expediting the Soquel/Morrissey Auxiliary Lane project have impacted the projected date for circulating the draft environmental documents on the HOV Lane project. The current schedule for release of the draft documents is late Fall 2008.

In May, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) approved the *2008 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)* which included \$1.375 million the RTC approved for the HOV Lane project to address the remaining shortfall for consulting services, associated project support costs, and contingency to complete PA/ED activities.

In June, the RTC approved an approach and format for the public meetings to be held in association with releasing the draft environmental documents. Three meetings are proposed in Watsonville, Aptos, and the Santa Cruz area. The format of the meetings includes an initial open house with comprehensive exhibits/displays for members of the public to view and discuss with project team members. The second portion of the meeting would be in a public hearing format facilitated by a Caltrans representative. A court reporter will be in attendance to record public comments either before or during the public hearing. The public can also submit written comments at any time during the proposed 45-day public comment period.

Highway 1 Soquel Avenue to Morrissey Boulevard Auxiliary Lanes Project

Through this period the project team has been reviewing and updating the engineering and environmental documents per Caltrans legal and technical staff preparatory to submitting the administrative documents to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for review prior to release to the public. The current project schedule indicates a public circulation date in late August/early September, but the exact date will be dependent on the timeliness of the preceding reviews.

The RTC approved an approach and format for the public meetings for the Auxiliary Lanes project, same as that described above for the HOV Lane project. There will be one public meeting for the Auxiliary Lanes project during the 30-day public comment period. A Caltrans representative will facilitate the public hearing portion of the project, and a court reporter will record all comments.

In June, the CTC approved the programming adjustments, recommended by the RTC, as part of the *2008 STIP*. These programming adjustments will allow the project team to do additional engineering and surveying in the PA/ED phase and be better prepared to meet the accelerated project schedule.

In June, the RTC gave direction to staff to begin the process where by the RTC would assume the role of construction manager on the Auxiliary Lanes project. Early direction on this issue was needed as there are implications in the current PA/ED phase relative to which agency is to manage the construction process. The initial steps in exercising the role of construction administrator include consideration of a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans outlining the responsibilities of construction management, and preparing a Request for Qualifications to solicit services of a qualified Construction Management firm that can perform those duties on behalf of the RTC. Those activities will begin in Spring 2009.

683 Highway Planning

Highway 1 Construction Authority (HCA)

The HCA met in May to receive a status report on the Highway 1 projects and discuss the CTC's recommendations on the *2008 STIP* and potential impacts to the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project and local agency projects. The CTC ultimately adopted the recommendations of the RTC in approving the *2008 STIP*, as discussed above.

Highway 1/17 Merge Lanes Project

This quarter RTC, Caltrans and City of Santa Cruz staff began discussions about final project issues including the groundbreaking ceremony. Construction on this project is approximately 85% complete and is expected to be finished before the original target date of summer 2009. Staff is working with Caltrans landscape staff to minimize time between the construction and landscaping projects.

The Branciforte bridge is still closed and a detour plan has been distributed to all interested parties. Demolition of the old bridge and construction of the new bridge have proceeded at a rapid pace this quarter. In addition, staff worked with Caltrans and the transit district to notify commuters, riders, neighbors and the Inn about the closure of the Pasatiempo off ramp on northbound Highway 17.

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. RTC increased Freeway Service Patrols through the interchange in response to weekend/summer congestion in the area.

Corridor System Management Plan for the State Route 1 Corridor

During this past quarter Caltrans has been collecting base data and identifying additional data collection methods and technologies to prepare the Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA)-mandated *Corridor System Management Plan* for the Highway 1 corridor.

670 Monterey Bay Transit Planning Rotational Intern

The Transit Planning Rotational Intern worked with senior transportation planners this quarter on agenda items for the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee including the development of the Local Review Committee for the Section 5310

grant applications, new member orientation binders, and research about safe paths of travel to medical facilities from transit vehicle stop locations. In addition, the intern helped prepare emission reduction estimates for a grant application for Air District funds to encourage use of multi-passenger vehicles.

Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association/Ecology Action

DN 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. The RTC approved the exchange of federal funds for state funds for four projects at its June meeting.

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