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NEWS RELEASE

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Voters Approve Propositions Aimed at Funding Transportation

Santa Cruz County's ailing transportation system received a boost on Tuesday with voter approval of Propositions 1A and 1B. Proposition 1A dedicates gasoline sales taxes to transportation.

Proposition 1B will bring \$19.9 Billion to transportation through the sale of bonds. With passage of Propositions 1A and 1B, residents can expect pot holes to be filled, buses to be upgraded, and major transportation projects to be constructed sooner than they otherwise could have been.

Proposition 1A ensures revenues from the state sales tax on gasoline are directed to public transit, local streets and roads, and regionally significant transportation projects. In recent years, these funds were regularly diverted to the state general fund, resulting in delays to several transportation projects in the region and making it difficult for public works departments, the Transit District, and other project sponsors to plan and build capital improvements. Passage of this proposition ensures more stable, reliable funding for transportation. Starting in FY2008/09, Santa Cruz County will receive approximately \$7 million annually from the state sales tax on gasoline (\$3 million for local streets and roads, \$3 million for regionally significant projects, and \$1 million for transit).

Without passage of Proposition 1A, projects such as acquisition of the rail line, safety improvements on Graham Hill Road, Highway 1/17 landscaping and Freeway Service Patrol were subject to further delays.

Proposition 1B – the transportation infrastructure bond, is projected to bring at least \$50 million to Santa Cruz County over the next 10 years, to be distributed as follows:

- Local Streets and Roads: \$12.2 million
- Public Transportation Modernization and Improvement: \$27.7 million
- State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP): \$11 million

The Regional Transportation Commission will consider projects to receive funds from the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) early next year.

In addition to these formula funds coming from the bonds sold under Proposition 1B, Santa Cruz County is eligible to receive some of the funds that will be distributed on a competitive basis, including \$4.5 billion designated for highway projects that improve mobility on congested corridors. Applications for these funds are due to the State in January 2007. As the second most congested roadway in the Central Coast region (behind Highway 101 through Santa Barbara), Highway 1 in Santa Cruz County may be a strong candidate for these funds. The California Transportation Commission expects to decide which corridor projects receive funding in March 2007.

Though Proposition 1B will facilitate the delivery of several transportation projects in the region, agencies throughout the county will continue to struggle to find sufficient funding to maintain and improve the existing transportation system. Executive Director, George Dondero noted “This is a down payment for the region’s transportation network. Public works departments have identified a \$175 million backlog in local street and road maintenance. None of the bond measures include funding to expand existing transit or paratransit service. The work of the community-based Transportation Funding Task Force is still very important in finding long term solutions to local transportation needs.”

One of the key responsibilities of the Regional Transportation Commission is to identify transportation needs in Santa Cruz County and select projects to receive funding as state and federal transportation monies become available. For more information, call SCCRTC at 831-460-3200 or visit www.sccrtc.org.