



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
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NEWS RELEASE

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Super Majority of Transportation Funding Task Force Approves Transportation Funding Plan

The Transportation Funding Task Force – a 70-plus member group of community leaders appointed by the Regional Transportation Commission in September of 2005 to develop a comprehensive transportation funding plan– held their final meeting Wednesday night, concluding with a Transportation Funding Plan approved on a 72% to 28% vote. The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission will consider placing the Plan before Santa Cruz County voters on a ballot measure.

Following dozens of community meetings, and the input of hundreds of community residents, and with the results of a recent poll of Santa Cruz County voters, the Task Force's Plan mirrored the support expressed in the poll results for a balanced transportation plan. The Task Force met until late in the evening finding common ground to approve a 35-year ½ cent sales tax plan that would fund the following:

- Congestion Relief Projects - \$300 million for Highway 1 improvements that would add High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, and Transportation Demand Management programs that increase van and car pooling
- Future Connection Projects - \$35 million for the Watsonville/Pajaro Train Station, Santa Cruz Branch Rail right-of-way renovations to continue freight service and keep trucks off roads and highways and seed money for passenger train service connecting Santa Cruz to Amtrak and Caltrain at the Watsonville/Pajaro Train Station
- Access Option Projects - \$130 million for maintenance and expansion of bus transit (including Bus Rapid Transit in the HOV lane of Highway 1) and specialized

transportation for seniors and people with disabilities

- Quality of Life/Neighborhood Projects - \$135 million for local street/road maintenance and repair, school traffic safety projects, bicycle and pedestrian projects, local enforcement, and neighborhood safety

In addition, the Task Force included language in the plan stating that passenger rail service along the coast be included with the appropriate feasibility determination, that the objective is to increase mobility and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and that funding be made available for a study of Personal Rapid Transit.

The Task Force has been meeting over the past 26 months with the public and each other to understand the depth and complexity of transportation issues. RTC Executive Director George Dondero thanked County Treasurer and former State Assemblymember Fred Keeley for having accepted the task of serving as Convener of the Task Force, and “for his exercise of diplomacy and leadership during the extensive and complex work of the Task Force.” Technical expertise was provided by Eileen Goodwin of Apex Consulting who has assisted many counties in the state with developing expenditure plans and implementing successful ballot measures.

At their December 6 meeting, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission will receive information about the next steps necessary to place a sales tax measure on the ballot. The November 2008 ballot is the most likely target date given that voter turnout is projected to be unusually large. The RTC will assess a number of components including ballot timing, additional research, voter climate, and transportation plan details before determining whether to place the measure on the ballot.

For more information about the Transportation Funding Task Force and the voter survey results, visit www.tftaskforce.org.

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission determines local priorities for transportation planning, policy, funding, coordination and advocacy. For more information, call SCCRTC at 831-460-3200 or visit www.sccrtc.org.