

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

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HIGHLIGHTS

August 26, 2009 Meeting

BOARD UPDATED ON HIGHWAY 156 WIDENING PROJECT

At its August 26, 2009 meeting, the Transportation Agency learned of new plans to phase in the Highway 156 widening project in order to be able to construct at least a portion of this critical project over time. The project, whose project draft environmental impact report/environmental assessment was released for public review and comment on June 30, 2009, will widen Highway 156 from 2 lanes to 4 lanes between Castroville Boulevard and US 101 and reconstruct the 101/156 connection between San Miguel Canyon Road and Highway 156.

Caltrans held a public hearing for the project and the environmental document at North Monterey High School on July 20, 2009 and the final environmental document is expected be completed by December 2010. As a major tourist route to the Monterey Peninsula and points south, improvements to this corridor are key for the economy of the county. The Transportation Agency continues to move this project forward however, until local dollars are found, construction will not begin on this project.

Improvements to this corridor will enhance safety, operations, local access to the highways, and capacity for future increases in traffic volumes on this heavily congested stretch of highway. After much review and public comment two build alternatives are under consideration. Alternative 11 would add two new lanes in both east bound and westbound directions, while the existing highway would essentially function as a frontage road. Alternative 12 would use the existing highway for part of the alignment and would add two new lanes south of the existing highway. Both build alternatives would include improvements to the US 101/Highway 156 and San Miguel Canyon interchanges, including new connectors to northbound and south bound US 101.

The estimated total cost for Alternative 11 is \$437 million. The estimated total cost for Alternative 12 is \$492 million. The build alternatives may need to be constructed in phases based on funding availability. It was originally anticipated that construction funding could be provided by the proposed transportation sales tax, but now additional funding sources will need to be secured to fully fund the project. Although the funding for the project has yet to be identified, staff will be working to secure a viable funding source for the project and to evaluate construction in phases based on funding availability.

**AGENCY APPROVES REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEE
STRATEGIC EXPENDITURE PLAN**

A range of transportation projects are one step closer to construction now that the Transportation Agency has approved the Strategic Expenditure Plan for the Regional Development Impact Fee. Projects that are slated to receive development impact fees in the first five year period include the US 101 San Juan Road Interchange and the Highway 68 (Holman Hwy) Widening Project at the Community Hospital. Both projects are key to regional traffic flows in the county.

The Strategic Expenditure Plan updates the project cost estimates and timeline for delivery of projects given new funding realities since the fee was adopted in August, 2008. Overall, the plan calls for reduced fees, due to the slower pace of development which delays the need for some project phases beyond the plan's 25-year timeline.

**FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION BILL:
STALLED**

The six-year transportation authorization bill, which determines where federal transportation funds will be invested over the next six years, is stalled in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Senate is moving toward an 18-month extension of the current authorization, instead of an overhaul of existing law. This delay will affect projects in Monterey County by postponing the opportunity for new federal monies for priority projects such as a new interchange at US 101 and San Juan Road (at the red barn).

The current transportation authorization law expires this year. Congressman James Oberstar introduced "The Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009, A Blueprint for Investment and Reform", which among other provisions would raise the cap on federal rail "small starts" projects from \$75 million to \$100 million. This increase would benefit plans to extend commuter rail to Salinas and to bring rail transit to the Monterey Peninsula. However, given the Senate action, it is unlikely that this bill will be approved for another 18 months. The last authorization bill, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), had twelve separate extensions prior to its passage.

The Transportation Agency has submitted requests for federal funding for four priority projects to be included in the authorization bill:

1. Hwy 101 and San Juan Road Interchange - \$17,875,000
2. Commuter Rail Extension to Salinas Right-of-Way - \$5,000,000

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|----|--|--------------|
| 3. | Monterey Branch Line Vehicle acquisition - | \$26,240,000 |
| 4. | Hwy 68 (Holman Hwy) widening to 4 lanes - | \$20,000,000 |

Congress has already approved \$7 billion in short-term funding to keep the Highway Trust Fund from running out of money before the end of the current fiscal year.

FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION STIMULUS FUNDS
PUT PEOPLE TO WORK IN MONTEREY COUNTY

Seven of the ten original projects allocated by the Transportation Agency Board in February 2009 have awarded contracts for construction and are currently providing new jobs for Monterey County residents. Expeditious effort by local agencies to bring the \$19,689,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funded projects to construction has resulted in bids for projects in Monterey County averaging 30% to 40% below the engineer's estimate.

Staff at the cities and the County have worked swiftly to bring American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funded projects to construction. As of July 17th, all of the local projects programmed by the Transportation Agency have been submitted to Federal Highway Administration for approval. Seven member agencies have awarded contracts for construction. The City of Soledad started work on the new traffic signal at Oak & Front Street in June, providing 75 new jobs. Projects in Seaside, Marina, Gonzales, and Monterey County all started construction in August.

Local Stimulus Projects:

Gonzales	2009 South Alta Street Overlay Project
Greenfield	Storm drains on El Camino Real
King City	2009 King City Resurfacing Project - Phase 1
Marina	California Ave Roadway Improvements
Monterey	Reconstruct Abrego St between Fremont to Eldorado
Monterey County	Espinosa Rd Overlay Project
Pacific Grove	Central Ave Curb and Gutter, Sidewalk Replacement
Pacific Grove	Citywide Rehabilitation Projects
Salinas	East Laurel Drive Improvements
Soledad	Oak St. Traffic Signal
Seaside	Reconstruct Del Monte Blvd: S City Limit to Broadway Ave

The Transportation Agency programmed the remaining \$10,450,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to the US 101/San Juan Road Interchange Project for property acquisition.

Expeditious effort by local agencies to bring American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funded projects to construction have placed Monterey County in a good position to

receive any American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds that may be redistributed after March 2, 2010. Eligible regions will receive redistributed Recovery Act funds based on how much money they have already put to work.

DEL REY OAKS RECEIVES FUNDS TO FIX ROSITA ROAD

The Transportation Agency allocated over \$13,000 in Regional Surface Transportation Program to the City of Del Rey Oaks to restore and resurface a portion of Rosita Road that has buckled due to root growth. The Agency distributes \$1.2 million per year in Regional Surface Transportation Program fair share funding by population to the local jurisdictions for a wide range of eligible transportation projects. Funding is programmed at the discretion of the local jurisdiction for their chosen projects, subject to approval by the Transportation Agency Board of Directors.