

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

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HIGHLIGHTS

October 28, 2009 Meeting

LIGHT RAIL SELECTED FOR MONTEREY PENINSULA

Monterey County residents are one step closer to riding light rail between Monterey and Marina after the Transportation Agency selected light rail as the locally preferred alternative for the Monterey Branch Line transit corridor. The 16 mile corridor extends between Monterey and Castroville on the publicly owned tracks adjacent to Highway 1. For the past few years, Transportation Board members have been discussing and reviewing the benefits to bus rapid transit or light rail transit for the planned corridor. Each alternative has its advantages; however light rail was selected based on its ability to provide superior transportation in the long-term while best meeting the vision and future plans for each of the peninsula cities. Light rail vehicles hold more riders than bus rapid transit vehicles and, unlike bus rapid transit, have the ability to add train cars at a nominal operating cost, which will be beneficial when ridership increases in the future. This capability to respond to long term growth is an essential feature of this mode choice. With tracks in the corridor, intercity rail can one day run from San Francisco to Monterey, providing a fast and efficient way of getting to and from San Francisco.

The first phase of the project will run between Monterey and north Marina with key stations in Monterey, Seaside, Sand City, Marina/CSUMB, and connecting bus service to Pacific Grove and Carmel to the south and Salinas to the east. Later phases will extend service to the planned commuter rail station in Castroville and increase the frequency of trains. The total capital cost for phase 1 of the project is \$128.5 million.

One of the next steps for the project will be to design computer simulations of what the light rail vehicles will look running on the corridor through the cities of Monterey and Marina. These visualizations were requested by the cities to help illustrate how light-rail will fit in with their communities. The Transportation Agency will also hold meetings with each of the cities to determine the best design and location for the transit stations, in particular where the terminus of the line will occur in the City of Monterey. Then, TAMC will complete the federal and state environmental review documents in preparation for requesting a major contribution of federal transit funds for construction. Start of service is planned for early 2015.

CASTROVILLE UNDERCROSSING AND MONTEREY BAY SANCTUARY SCENIC TRAIL TO RECEIVE TRANSPORTATION FUNDS

The Transportation Agency approved funding for two key regional bicycle and pedestrian paths in north Monterey County: the Castroville Undercrossing and the Moss Landing segment of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail.

A key link in the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail, the 1.17 mile Moss Landing segment will provide a separate bridge over the Elkhorn Slough, connecting the north harbor via a path to Moss Landing Road. Construction is expected to take place in 2011 and the total project cost is \$4.9 million. The \$255,155 in Transportation Development funds allocated by the Transportation Agency will provide some of the necessary local match to fully fund the project. Staff will continue to seek other sources of funding from agencies such as the Air District and Coastal Conservancy.

The Castroville undercrossing project consists of a Class I bike path from Salinas Street to the existing path on Castroville Boulevard, with an undercrossing at the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The project will help to facilitate the safe crossing of Castroville residents to and from North County High School. The project has a total cost of \$6,000,000. The proposed shift of Transportation Enhancement funding from the Salinas River bicycle and pedestrian bridge project, combined with local transportation development act funding, will fully fund the project. Construction can take place as early as 2013.

AGENCY RECEIVES FUNDS TO SUPPORT BICYCLING

A new county bicycle and pedestrian plan will soon be underway due to the a grant of \$63,725 in Motor Vehicle Emission Reduction Grant program funds from the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District. The Transportation Agency also received \$22,184 to purchase bicycle racks and lockers to be distributed to employers and businesses in Monterey County.

The AB 2766 Motor Vehicle Emission Reduction Grant program, administered by the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, provides funding for projects that will improve air quality by reducing motor vehicle emissions. Since the AB 2766 grant program began 18 years ago, the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District has awarded \$25.3 million grants to 449 projects in Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties, providing an estimated \$25.3 million in emissions reductions.

COMMUTER RAIL TO SALINAS

MOVING FORWARD

Commuter rail from the San Francisco Bay Area to Salinas is still on track for arrival in 2012. The Transportation Agency approved a \$1.43 million contract with Parsons Transportation Group for the preliminary engineering and design phase of the project. This phase will focus on preliminary designs for the Gilroy Yard, the Pajaro Station, the Castroville Station, the Salinas Layover Facility, and the Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center; updating surveys; utility mapping; construction cost estimates; and right-of-way appraisals. Construction is planned to begin in 2011.

DEVELOPMENT FEES REDUCED FOR SOUTH MONTEREY COUNTY

Transportation Agency amended its Strategic Expenditure Plan for the Regional Development Impact Fees after the City of Greenfield supplied the Agency with updated information on the US-101/Walnut Avenue interchange project. The changes reduce the total project cost from \$45.5 million to \$28.8 million (of which \$11.8 million will come from regional fees) and move the project to earlier in the project delivery schedule.

The result of this project cost change is a reduction in the level of fees paid by new development in all zones, most notably in the South County zone. The regional impact fee program, adopted by the Transportation Agency in August, 2008, is expected to generate approximately \$236 million (2007 dollars) through 2030.

ANNUAL TRANSPORTATION EXCELLENCE AWARDS: CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Is there an individual, group, business or program in Monterey County that has significantly contributed to the way we get around in 2009? Do they deserve to be recognized? Nominate this individual, group, business or program for a Transportation Excellence Award. The Transportation Agency would like to encourage and appreciate the efforts made by Monterey County residents, businesses and employees. Nomination forms can be found at: <http://www.tamcmonterey.org/programs/excelaward/index.html> and are due by December 7, 2009. The awards ceremony will take place before the regular January 27, 2010 Transportation Agency Board meeting.

Examples of potential awards include but are not limited to:

- Transportation employees who excel at their jobs and go the extra mile to promote the most efficient use of the transportation system.
- Innovative activities that promote more efficient use of the local transportation network.
- Citizens or organizations that have made significant efforts to inform and educate the public about transportation issues.
- Successful efforts to improve transit services and encourage the use of alternatives to driving alone.

BICYCLE FUNDS SEEKING APPLICATIONS

Applications for the state Bicycle Transportation Account Program are due December 1, 2009 to Caltrans. The Bicycle Transportation Account Program funds city and county projects that improve safety and convenience for bicycle commuters.

To be eligible for the Bicycle Transportation Account funds, a city or county must prepare and adopt a Bicycle Transportation Plan that complies with Streets and Highways Code 891.2, items a.-k. The plan must be reviewed and approved by the Transportation Agency.

Projects applying for the funds must be in a Bicycle Transportation Plan adopted January 1, 2005 or later. Projects that were not identified in the Transportation Agency's regional 2005 General Bikeways Plan will not be eligible for the funds.

Projects funded by the Bicycle Transportation Account in the past include construction of bicycle lanes, bicycle boulevards, trail projects, and bicycle/pedestrian overcrossings.

Applications are due to the local California Department of Transportation District Local Assistance Office on Tuesday, December 1, 2009. Additional information is available online at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/bta/btawebPage.htm>.

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