

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

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HIGHLIGHTS

April 28, 2010 Meeting

GOLDEN HELMET AWARDED

The first annual Golden Helmet Award was presented to Frank Henderson for his dedication to bicycling to and from work. Mr. Henderson commutes 100 miles a week between Salinas and Monterey for his job as Tutorial Service Coordinator at Hartnell Community College and his volunteer position at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Mr. Henderson was awarded a \$100 gift certificate to a local bike shop of his choice as a prize.

A Silver Helmet Award was also presented to Alejandro Pujols for his dedication to riding his bike to and from work and for his commitment to promoting Monterey County Bike Week.

The aim of this award is to highlight the benefits of bicycle commuting and inspire others to utilize alternative transportation modes. The Agency received a total of 71 nomination forms for ten different award nominees. The Transportation Agency Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee appointed a subcommittee to review, rank and recommend a winner to the Transportation Agency Board. The winner was determined base on dedication to bicycling as an alternative form of transportation, as well as, frequency and length of travel, history of bicycle commuting, persistence in inclement weather or other materially adverse conditions, adoption of best practice such as courteous riding habits, bicycle advocacy, and inspiration to others.

AIRPORT BOULEVARD INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS **WILL BID IN MAY**

Bids for construction of a new Airport Boulevard interchange and new on and off ramps on the east side of Highway 101 will be open this May 2010 with construction scheduled to start this July and completed in 12 months.

One of the Transportation Agency's top 5 priorities this project has both regional and national significance. From March through November, 2,700 interstate trucks leave the

Airport Boulevard Interchange area of South Salinas each day transporting fresh vegetables and other goods to the rest of the nation. Currently, traffic backs up into gridlock due to the outdated interchange design.

To expedite the construction, the project was split into two phases. The first phase will address traffic on the east side of US 101 and reconfigure the on and off ramps to better facilitate the traffic. This phase will also add one new eastbound lane to the existing bridge to help relieve the congestion. Phase 1 is expected to help relieve the majority of the congestion around the interchange for the next 10 years. The second phase to be programmed in the future, will construct a new 4 or 5 lane structure over US 101. It will also construct new on and off ramps improve traffic flow on adjacent local roads and at nearby intersections on the westside of the highway. The new bridge will utilize the newly constructed ramps on the eastside of the highway.

MONTEREY BRANCH LINE LIGHT RAIL **VIDEO SIMULATION**

The Transportation Agency viewed a video simulation of what light rail could look like running and stopping at stations on the Monterey Branch Line corridor through Monterey Peninsula cities. This simulation will provide residents a better idea of what the light rail line will look and feel like. Key simulation locations include: a station located at Custom House Plaza in Monterey, a station at Reservation Road in Marina, and a view of Window on the Bay as the light rail train passes.

Presentations of the video simulation will be shown at City Council meetings along the corridor this Spring. The simulation will be shown at the Monterey City Council meeting on Tuesday, May 18, 2010. To learn more about the project and to keep updated on future public meeting dates visit the Monterey Branch Line webpage at: <http://www.tamcmonterey.org/programs/rail/montereyline.html>.

The Transportation Agency is currently completing the federal and state environmental review documents for the Monterey Branch Line project in preparation for requesting a major contribution of federal transit funds for construction. Start of service is planned for early 2015.

BEACH RANGE ROAD BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS **TO START CONSTRUCTION**

Improvements to Beach Range Road, in Fort Ord Dunes State Park, paralleling the west side of the existing California Department of Transportation Recreation Trail will begin

this summer. As one of the projects identified in the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Master Plan improvements will include slurry seal, striping and signage, and safety improvements. Areas of interest along the path will also be highlighted with interpretive panels, and picnic tables and bicycle racks will be installed.

After the improvements are made, a bicycle and pedestrians paths will be placed on the road, which will offer users a greater separation from traffic on the highway and at interchanges. The agency will administer the project on behalf of the State Parks Department. Funding is provided through a federal appropriation sponsored by Congressman Farr.

SUPPORT FOR GREEN ROUTES TO SCHOOLS GRANT

Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey counties are applying for between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 in Reformulated Gasoline Settlement Funds to fund a Green Routes to School program. The Reformulated Gasoline Settlement Fund is the result of a settlement of class action lawsuits against Union Oil Company of California and Unocal Corporation. Non-profit organizations can compete for approximately \$7 million for projects that are designed to achieve fuel or air emission benefits for consumers in California. Santa Cruz Ecology Action is applying for this grant to fund a Green Routes to School program for the tri-county Monterey Bay area.

The Green Routes to School program will build upon the existing Ecology Action's bicycle and sustainable transportation program, and aim to serve school children between kindergarten and 12th grade. The program has several components, including carpooling, busing, electric vehicles, and walking and bike safety education.

MST RECIEVES FEDERAL TRANSIT FUNDS

Monterey Salinas Transit will receive \$371,573 in federal rural transit funds this year to operate service on rural routes, such as line 23 in South Monterey County, Line 24 in Carmel Valley and Line 22 to Big Sur. The Federal Transit Administration's Section 5311 grant provides federal funding for public transportation projects and intercity city bus projects serving areas with a population of 50,000 or less. The grant is intended to provide access to employment, education, health care, shopping and recreation in small towns and rural areas.