

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

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HIGHLIGHTS

March 24, 2010 Meeting

STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATION AFFECTING TRANSPORTION

Transit service in Monterey County will keep moving with Governor Schwarzenegger recently signing into law the "gas tax swap" package, restoring funding to the State Transit Assistance program that was depleted in 2009. The bill package eliminates the excise tax on diesel, increases the rate of sales tax on diesel fuel, and makes an immediate appropriation of \$400 million to transit operations. While this keeps state transit assistance at the prior year's funding levels, it is still well below the levels anticipated under existing law: Monterey-Salinas Transit had expected \$10 million for operations over the next two years and will instead receive \$2.6 million in that period. The package also eliminates the sales tax on gasoline and increases the excise tax on gas to restore lost Proposition 42 funds and to provide General Fund relief in the form of a new revenue stream for transportation bond debt service.

Not only will this new law keep Monterey County's vital transit service in place but it will also increase our ability to fund planned rail services:

- Commuter rail service from the bay area to Salinas, Pajaro, Castroville
- Light rail service between Monterey, Marina and Castroville as well as connect to intercity rail service to Salinas, San Jose, and San Francisco.

On March 18, 2010, President Barack Obama signed the jobs stimulus bill. Officially known as the Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act, the bill is meant to encourage private sector hiring, in part, through a series of tax incentives. This bill will continue the flow of funding to the Federal Highway Transportation Fund but does not contain new funding for "stimulus" transportation projects.

Both the "gas tax swap" and the HIRE Act shore up the Transportation Agency's ability to retain funding for key projects in the pipeline such as:

- US 101—San Juan Road Interchange
- US 101—Prunedale Improvement Project
- Highway 156 Widening and Interchange Improvements
- Highway 68 Commuter Improvements

- Highway 101—South County Improvements

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN **PUBLIC HEARING**

The Transportation Agency is required by state and federal regulations to prepare a long range Regional Transportation Plan for Monterey County including an analysis of regional transportation needs, transportation policies, funding projections, and a regional project list covering a 25-year timeframe. Actions to program or allocate funds to specific projects must be consistent with the regional plan, which is a program-level document that does not include specific plans or constitute final approval for regional projects.

Currently, a draft of the Regional Transportation Plan and the supplemental Environmental Impact Report are available for public review, until April 19, 2010. The Transportation Agency Board expects to adopt the final plan at the May 26, 2010 meeting.

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY **2009 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Transportation Agency 2009 Annual Report will be mailed to residents and businesses throughout the County during the month of April. It will focus on increasing awareness of the Transportation Agency's presence in Monterey County while building a reputation of trust and fiscal responsibility. It will continue to focus on the theme that we're doing the best with what we have and will continue to do an effective job with the resources that will continue to be available, such as fully funding the Highway 1/Salinas Road Interchange project in 2009, exploring potential phasing options for the Highway 156 Widening project, and continuing to pursue the rail projects in Monterey County. The Annual Report will also stress to residents the continued needs in the county and the challenges in funding transportation projects and that there are a number of projects on the cusp of construction (that require more funding) that the Agency would like to complete.

2010 MONTEREY COUNTY BIKE WEEK

The 16th Annual Bike Week in Monterey County, is scheduled for May 10– 16, 2010. Bike Week 2010 will focus on the following activities:

Week of May 3rd

- Bicycle Safety Orientation

Monday, May 3 – Friday, May 28

- A month long team bike challenge where companies/agencies compete for the highest percent of employees bicycling to work

Wednesday, May 5

- Pacific Grove Bike to City Council Meeting Ride (5:30 p.m.)

Tuesday, May 11

- Bike vs. Car Challenge (7:45 a.m.)
- Salinas Bike to City Council Meeting Ride (4:30 p.m.)

Wednesday, May 12

- Community Ride (6 p.m.)

Thursday, May 13

- Bike to Work/School Day

Sunday, May 16

- Morning ride with the Velo Club of Monterey (8:00 a.m.), Portola Plaza

The goals for 2010 Bike Week are to increase event attendance by 20%, increase Bike to School Day participation in South Monterey County area, and increase the number of bike to city council events.

In addition to the traditional Bike Week events such as Bike vs. Car challenge and Community Ride, two new events are being proposed for this year. One of the events is to offer a discounted bike safety maintenance check at local bike shops. Bike shops are invited to participate in this promotion by offering bike safety and maintenance services at a discounted price during the month of April through Bike Week.

Another new event is to a Golden Helmet Award competition, where a local bicyclist will be recognized for his/her dedication for using bicycle for daily trips. The event is modeled after the Bicycle Commuter of the Year event at the San Francisco Bay Area. His/her stories will showcase many of the bicycling commuting benefits, and will be used to inspire others to practice alternative transportation modes. The award will be presented to a winner at the April Transportation Agency Board meeting.

To learn more about Monterey County Bike Week visit: www.bike2work.com.

COMMUTER RAIL EXTENSION TO SALINAS: MOVING FORWARD

Passenger rail to Monterey County is moving forward with the Transportation Agency Board approval of the contract with Parsons Transportation Group for preliminary engineering. The rail service will extend commuter rail service from the bay area to Pajaro/Watsonville, Castroville, and Salinas, providing an alternative to driving on congested Highway 101.

To this point, conceptual design, state and federal environmental review and the federally required alternatives analysis are complete. This stage of the project will advance the preliminary engineering designs, and determine cost estimates and draft specifications, for the Gilroy Yard, Pajaro Valley Station, Castroville Station, Salinas Layover Facility, and Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center. Construction for this project is expected to begin in 2012 with service to the bay area beginning in 2013.