

**TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY**

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***HIGHLIGHTS***

**September 22, 2010 Meeting**

**MONTEREY BAY 511 TRAVELER INFORMATION SYSTEM  
STUDY BEGINS**

The Transportation Agency and the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission are preparing a comprehensive plan to implement a Monterey Bay Area 511 Traveler Information System. This plan will study what components of a traveler information system will best meet the needs of Monterey and Santa Cruz County residents and will provide an accurate cost estimate for system deployment.

A 511 Traveler Information System generally has two components -- the voice recognition phone system and the website. Both components are dedicated to provide a wide range of information, from vehicle travel times on major highways, to transit schedules, rideshare and carpool matching, weather and visitor information. By making information easy to access, travelers can make more informed choices about when to travel, what type of transportation to use, and what route to take. A 511 System will be an effective strategy for simultaneously addressing numerous transportation challenges in both the short and long-term, at a low cost, and with significant benefits for multiple modes. Currently, 511 systems exist throughout California and the nation, including in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Sacramento area and San Luis Obispo County.

The Monterey Bay 511 feasibility and implementation study is funded with a \$259,000 air district grant. To learn more about the 511 system and to take a user survey that will help identify the types of information and services that will best meets the needs of the community visit <http://511montereybay.org/>.

**2035 MONTEREY BAY AREA REGIONAL BLUEPRINT:  
ENVISIONING A GREENER MONTEREY BAY AREA**

The Monterey Bay Area Blueprint Plan being developed by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments is intended to identify growth areas and transportation corridors that can be served by fast, convenient transit services, and support land use that promotes walking and biking. The Regional Blueprint Plan will help the region meet state targets

for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that lead to climate change. The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments has approved per capita greenhouse gas emission reduction targets of 0% (over 2005 levels) by 2020, and a reduction of 5% by 2035. These targets are more aggressive than the minimum required by the Air Resources Board for the Monterey Bay Area, but more conservative than the targets set by the state's large urban regions.

The blueprint in coordination with the region's next Regional Transportation Plan will identify projects and programs that will work in coordination with land use policies to reduce vehicle miles traveled and resulting greenhouse gases.

### **NEW BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE COUNCIL MEMBER**

The Transportation Agency approved Geoffrey Shester to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee representing the Supervisorial District 4. Mr. Shester commutes daily to and from Monterey via bicycle, and sees a need for offering safe and convenient transportation options. As the California Program Director for Oceana and a conservation advocate, he would like to encourage the use of alternative transportation and help to shape the future direction for bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the County.

### **LACK OF STATE BUDGET APPROVAL REQUIRES EXCHANGE OF FUNDS BETWEEN PROJECTS**

To avoid a loss of \$1,242,000 in state grant funds, The Transportation Agency approved the exchange of \$334,000 in Transportation Development Act funds from the Castroville Railroad Crossing Bicycle/Pedestrian Path project to the Carmel Valley Class I Bicycle Path project for Transportation Enhancement funds.

Although the California Transportation Commission approved the County's request for \$334,000 in Transportation Enhancement funds for the Carmel Valley Bicycle Path, the authorization to use the funds will not be granted by the state until the State budget is approved. Waiting for approval of the State budget could cause the project to miss its April 30, 2011 construction deadline, which would mean a loss of \$1,242,000 in construction funds. Approval of this exchange keeps the project fully funded and on schedule.

### **COMMUTER RAIL EXTENSION TO SALINAS:**

## **LOOKING TO LOWER CONSTRUCTION COSTS**

The Transportation Agency approved a contract with Harris & Associates to perform value engineering for the Commuter Rail to Salinas project. Value engineering is a process used to determine if there are ways to reduce the project cost. Consultants will conduct an independent review of the project designs and recommend alternative design approaches (if any) to save costs.

The Commuter Rail to Salinas project will extend existing rail service from the San Francisco Bay Area to Pajaro/Watsonville, Castroville, and Salinas, providing an alternative to driving on congested Highway 101. Construction for this project is expected to begin in 2012 with service beginning in 2013 or 2014.