

## TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

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### *HIGHLIGHTS*

**August 24, 2011 Meeting**

### **MONTEREY COUNTY FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR STATE TRANSPORTATION FUNDS**

The Transportation Agency received the good news that it will have a target amount of \$46,900,000 and a minimum county share of \$39,630,000 in state transportation dollars for the next five years starting in 2012. This funding is made available from state and federal gasoline taxes and is allocated by the California Transportation Commission, a board appointed by the Governor and the state legislature. This money will primarily be available in the fourth and fifth years of the program.

The Transportation Agency will consider a proposal for the use of these funds at its October 26 meeting, based on the regional priorities that were set in its June, 2011 strategic planning session. That session set its Tier 1 priority projects as: the US 101 San Juan Road Project, Highway 156 Widening, the US 101 South County Frontage Road Projects, Commuter Rail to Salinas, Monterey Branch Line light rail and local road projects. While these funds are unlikely to be available for local road projects, they could be used to free up more flexible moneys for such projects.

Some of this money, approximately \$1.65 million, is available for so-called “enhancements” to the transportation system including bikeways and sidewalks. Another share of funding, about \$1.3 million over five years, is set aside for project delivery activities conducted by the Transportation Agency.

Coordination with Caltrans and other regional partners will be initiated to improve the amount and timing of state funds that are garnered for projects in Monterey County. The Transportation Agency needs to submit its 2012 Regional Transportation Improvement Program to the California Transportation Commission by December 15, 2011. The state Commission is expected to adopt the program in late March, 2012.

### **DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE ON REALIGNMENT OF PUBLIC AGENCIES**

The Transportation Agency Board continues to discuss the idea of taking on the federal metropolitan transportation organization (MPO) responsibilities that are currently handled by the multi-county Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments. The purpose of such a shift to a “single-county MPO” would be to improve cost effectiveness and increase operational efficiencies by removing duplication of efforts across the agencies.

Taxpayer savings under a single-county scenario would be approximately \$297,500 in state funds, plus approximately \$173,700 in dues collected from member cities and counties, for a total savings of approximately \$471,200 per year. The Transportation Agency itself would receive a net annual increase of \$250,000 in federal funds.

Responsibilities that could be taken on by the Transportation Agency as a single county MPO include:

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Plan
- Multi-County Travel Forecast Model (utilized for general plans, transportation projects, capital improvement plans)
- Regional Housing Needs Assessment (occurs every 8 years)
- Census Data Center (disseminates population information)
- Monterey County Ridesharing Activities
- Sustainable Communities Strategy (part of the Regional Transportation Plan)

### **UPDATED MONTEREY COUNTY BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN**

The draft Transportation Agency Monterey County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This Plan will guide the design and planning of bicycle and pedestrian facilities improvements, and position the local cities and the Transportation Agency for grants to finance these improvements. The new plan includes a pedestrian component that was not previously included in the Agency's 2005 General Bikeways Plan.

The 2011 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan identifies all existing and proposed bicycle projects and facilities of jurisdictions within the Monterey County region; and satisfies the General Bikeways Plan requirements set by the California Department of Transportation. The plan also identifies a prioritized list of regionally significant bicycle and pedestrian projects listed. This priority list will help guide the allocation of Agency-administered bikeway, trail and sidewalk funds.

Transportation Agency for Monterey County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan will be up for adoption by the Transportation Agency Board at the September 2011 board meeting. Comments can be made on the plan until Friday, September 2, 2011 to Kaki Cheung at [kaki@tamcmonterey.org](mailto:kaki@tamcmonterey.org).

### **HIGH SPEED RAIL STATION IN GILROY PREFERRED IN DOWNTOWN**

The Transportation Agency approved a resolution to support the High Speed Rail downtown Gilroy station over the Leavesley Road station near US 101. The nearest High Speed Rail station to Monterey County would be in Gilroy. The downtown Gilroy station is expected to be a stop on the planned commuter rail extension of train service to

Salinas. Currently the Caltrain Commuter Rail Station in Gilroy is also located in downtown on Monterey Street. By locating the High Speed Rail Station in downtown Gilroy, it would allow Salinas and other Monterey County passengers to walk from one train to the other.

The California High-Speed Rail project is a statewide project administered by the California High-Speed Rail Authority to connect Los Angeles and San Diego to San Francisco and Sacramento via the Central Valley. All electric powered and fully separated from automobile traffic, California's high-speed train would provide a new transportation option available to more than 90% of the residents of the state. The system is being designed to carry more than 100 million passengers a year. The Alternatives Analysis Report for the San Jose to Merced section of the project was released for public review in May. A draft Environmental Impact Report will be available for public review in early 2012. Construction is expected to begin in 2012 with service between San Francisco and Los Angeles/ Anaheim starting in 2020.

### **COMMUTER RAIL VISUAL SIMULATIONS**

Visual simulations of the Salinas and Parajo stations for the Commuter Rail to Salinas project are now available and can be seen in the attached document. These drawings will aid in making presentations to the public and provide viewers a better idea of what the area will look like once the stations are constructed.

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. The project is currently under federal environmental review. Start of service is expected in 2014.