

# TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

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## *HIGHLIGHTS*

### **September 28, 2011 Meeting**

#### **FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION BILL AND GAS TAX EXTENDED**

The Transportation Agency Board heard a report on Federal Legislation. The Federal Surface Transportation Authorization bill and the federal gas tax were extended to March 2012, keeping transportation programs funded for another six months. This is the eighth extension of the "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – a Legacy for Users" (SAFETEA-LU). The funding source for transportation projects, the 18.4 cents per gallon federal gas tax, was also extended.

Both the Senate and the House have drafted reauthorization bills: Senator Boxer's Environment and Public Works Committee crafted a two-year, \$109 billion reauthorization that would keep spending at current levels. Senator Boxer has also begun discussions on how to raise additional transportation revenues to continue to fund transportation beyond the bill's two-year limit. In July, Congressman Mica's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee proposed a six-year, \$235 billion bill that assumes no new transportation revenues, resulting in a one-third cut to transportation funding compared to the current transportation law. Both proposals are significantly less than the \$556 billion President Obama proposed spending on transportation at the beginning of this year. House Republicans appear to have signed off on adopting the Senate's approach of finding just enough revenue to keep funding at current levels. Taxes on gasoline and diesel are the biggest contributors to the Highway Trust Fund, but they have not kept pace with spending demands, as fuel-efficient vehicles grow in popularity and taxes lose ground to inflation. House Speaker John Boehner discussed the possibility of linking expanded American energy production with increased transportation funding, but has not fleshed out how expanded oil and gas leasing could be tied to infrastructure spending. However, no House action is likely on long-term bill this calendar year unless the Senate moves its bill on a bipartisan basis.

On September 8, the House passed a transportation appropriations bill, which contains no earmarks, and reflects a 35% cut to highway funding. The Senate version keeps spending at current year levels. The appropriations bill governs transportation spending for federal fiscal year 2012 (October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012), and must be passed by September 30, 2011 to take effect. All spending bills are in limbo pending resolution of the federal budget deal, and may end up being Continuing Resolutions, which would continue funding at current levels.

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

The Transportation Agency Board discussed the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments response to the idea of the Transportation Agency taking on the federal metropolitan transportation organization (MPO) responsibilities that are currently handled by the multi-county Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments. AMBAG contemplates keeping the current separate agency structure however performance improvements and streamlining are anticipated.

The next steps are a joint agency Executive Committee Meeting on October 6, 2011 and discussions with the City of Salinas Council on October 11, 2011.

### **MST RECEIVES STATE TRANSIT FUNDS**

The Transportation Agency adopted a resolution allocating over \$2,700,000 to Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) in State Transit Assistance funds for RIDES paratransit operations. State Transit Assistance funds are generated through the state sales tax on diesel fuel and are used by transit operators for capital improvements such as new bus purchases. State law allows MST to claim these funds for operating costs related to its Americans with Disabilities Act compliant RIDES paratransit service, which is provided pursuant to the federal mandate.

### **TRANSPORTATION AGENCY REQUEST FOR GRAPHIC DESIGNERS**

The Transportation Agency has issued a Request for Qualifications for on-call consultant(s) to assist the Agency and the member agencies with projects that require marketing and graphic design assistance. A number of projects are in need of marketing graphic design assistance. Consultants will work closely with staff to design project flyers, pamphlets, logos, mailers and the Agency Annual Report.

To view the Request for Qualifications visit the Transportation Agency website at: [http://www.tamcmonterey.org/information/bids\\_prop/index.html](http://www.tamcmonterey.org/information/bids_prop/index.html) or contact Kristen Hoschouer at: [Kristen@tamcmonterey.org](mailto:Kristen@tamcmonterey.org).

### **GREENFIELD RECEIVES STATE TRANSPORTATION FUNDS**

The Transportation Agency allocated more than \$3 million in Regional Surface Transportation Funds to the City of Greenfield to complete the City's Speed Study Project. Projects eligible for Regional Surface Transportation Program funding include local street and roadway rehabilitation, local match for federal transportation funds, bike lanes, pedestrian facilities, public transit capital, and signal coordination.

### **REVISED--GREENFIELD RECEIVES STATE TRANSPORTATION FUNDS**

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