

THE COORDINATOR

April 2003 * 1150 Osos Street, Suite 202, SLO, CA 93401 * Phone 805-781-4219 * Fax 805-781-5703

Cuesta Grade Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program

On April 2nd, the consultant hired to analyze the Cuesta Grade TDM program presented the findings to the Board. The consultant was hired in November 2002 to determine the effectiveness of each mode in reducing single occupancy vehicles trips over the Cuesta Grade. The study also assessed future options to fund successful alternative transportation programs.

Overall, the study found:

1. Carpool incentives (such as the Fill-up your Car Program) were the most cost-effective Transportation Demand Management element;
2. Transit was effective at reducing vehicle trips and did so at a lower cost than vanpools (incentives included discounted bus passes);
3. Vanpools (incentives included subsidized fares) were the most effective at reducing daily trips and vehicle miles traveled, but they did so at a higher cost than transit.

Avila Beach Trolley Service

On April 2, 2003, the SLOCOG Board approved the Avila Beach Trolley as an "unmet transit need reasonable to meet" for fiscal year 2003/2004. Starting July 1, 2003, the County will contract with the Avila Beach Community Foundation to continue the service. The County will be using TDA funds to operate the service, allocated to the County by SLOCOG. In addition, SLOCOG will reimburse the County an additional \$8,000 for operating a small portion of the route that goes into the Shell Beach area of Pismo Beach.



The trolley's current route extends from Port San Luis to the Spy Glass Restaurant in Shell Beach using Avila Beach Road and San Luis Bay Drive. Ridership in 2002 was approximately 10,000 riders.

Service started on January 5, 2002, and funding would have expired in June of this year. The Avila Beach Trolley was originally initiated by the

Avila Beach Community Foundation using money from the Unocal settlement, which the Foundation oversees, and by a grant from the local Air Pollution Control District.

The current provider, Santa Ynez Valley Transportation Services, will continue to operate the trolley. The fare will remain free because the Foundation has agreed to subsidize fares to the equivalent of a ten percent fare box recovery ratio, the amount required by TDA regulations. This means that the fare or fare subsidy must be equal to ten percent of the operating costs.

SLOCOG staff received numerous requests and a petition signed by both residents and riders. After analyzing all the data, SLOCOG agreed that it was feasible to make the request an "unmet transit need reasonable to meet."

If you have any questions about the Avila Beach Trolley, please contact Bill Chandler at 781-5190 or Pete Rodgers at 781-5712.

CALL BOXES RETURNING TO THE CUESTA GRADE

At the March 5, 2003 meeting, the SLOCOG Board approved the expenditure of \$35,000 to upgrade six (6) call boxes along the Cuesta Grade in Summer 2003 to serve the speech and hearing impaired drivers. Standard call boxes were removed in 2001 to allow for the \$48 million Cuesta Grade construction project.

The approved upgrade will include retrofitting the call boxes with digital technology and will allow speech and hearing impaired drivers to easily use the call box. The upgrade is composed of a pull out Teletex Typewriter (TTY) keyboard and digital transceiver.

The use of these call boxes will help determine the future of upgrading the remaining 163 standard call boxes in San Luis Obispo County.

For more information, contact Philip Chu at (805) 781-4223 or e-mail pchu@slocog.org.





511 is the new three-digit phone number for traveler information. In June of 2000, the Federal Communications Commission assigned 511 to the transportation community, and several states and regions are in the planning and implementation stages of their 511 services. Today, travelers have to call more than 300 different phone numbers for traveler

information nationwide.

The national vision is for the majority of Americans to have access to 511 by 2005. Currently, 511 is operational in Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Orlando, Utah, Vermont, Virginia's Interstate 81, and California's Bay Area. Nearly 20% of all Americans can call 511.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Bay Area's Regional Transportation Planning Agency, rolled-out its 511 service in December 2002. The launch is the result of a partnership between MTC, Caltrans, the California Highway Patrol, 35 different transit operators, 20 providers of paratransit services for elderly or disabled riders, and RIDES for Bay Area Commuters Inc., which supplies carpooling, vanpooling, bicycling, and other commute option information, including information about transportation to airports.

California's other urban metropolitan areas are currently converting their existing and planned advanced multimodal traveler information systems (including 1-800-COMMUTE in L.A.) or establishing enhanced 511 services. Los Angeles and greater Southern California, San Diego, and Sacramento will unveil systems in 2003 and 2004. Caltrans is leading a planning process to develop rural and inter-regional travel information systems, including implementation of 511 for the non-urban areas.

SLOCOG staff participated with Caltrans in the early stages of 511 development in the Central Coast. Caltrans is the responsible agency to set up the backbone and the software for the system – this includes 511 routing and the voice response software telephony system. 511 in rural California will build on existing state and regional systems and technology investments. Each Caltrans District sends pertinent information such as closures, restrictions, construction activities, major weather hazards, and major incidents to their Highway Information Network. Conversion of the current road conditions telephone number (1-800-427-ROAD) can easily be switched over to the 511 system to continue dissemination of information. Additional existing information, such as transit and ridesharing information (541-CARS), may also be added. By the end of 2004, the 511 system will meet National 511 Guidelines for content and accessibility. While the transit agencies, chambers of commerce, jurisdictions, and Caltrans may contribute, the implementation of data collection devices to increase and improve information dissemination will largely fall to the local region for funding.

For additional information, contact James Worthley at SLOCOG, jworthley@slocog.org or 781-4219.

Status of High Priority Planned Projects Reviewed

At the April meeting, the SLOCOG Board reviewed the status of work on 36 high priority state highway projects currently in various stages of the planning process. Of the identified projects, 16 have a completed Project Study Report (PSR), 11 have one in process, and 9 others are priority candidates. The Board was also asked to determine whether Caltrans should start work on any new PSRs in the coming fiscal year.

The PSR is a project initiation document that translates broad improvement concepts into programmable projects by identifying a range of alternatives, estimated costs, anticipated impacts, and a delivery schedule. Highway projects must have a completed PSR to be considered for State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding. The completed PSR is then used as the basis for conducting preliminary engineering and environmental analysis (PA&ED - Project Approval and Environmental

Document) and detailed engineering (PS&E – Plans, Specifications and Estimates) required prior to allocating "construction dollars."

The estimated total cost for construction of the projects with a completed PSR is \$326.7 million, while the cost to construct those with a PSR in process is an additional \$85.3 million. The long-term candidate projects would add \$50.5 million (in today's dollars). The significant cost of these projects illustrates the dramatic demand on resources and programming capacity. The long road from project initiation to construction is a 10-15 year process.

State priorities for future funding are targeted toward mainline improvements on Caltrans' designated Focus Routes (101 & 46 in SLO County). For the San Luis Obispo region, Caltrans generally conducts one or two PSRs per year for mainline improvements on these focus routes or other state highways as prioritized by the regional agency. All other PSRs, project development documentation, and construction for interchanges and other improvements will likely need to be funded from other sources (SLOCOG's Regional Transportation Improvement Program funds and/or local funds).

The SLOCOG Board approved the staff recommendation that no new PSRs be started at this time but that Caltrans give a priority to completing three that are currently underway, including:

- US 101/SR 1 Interchange in SLO City focused on "Operational Improvements."

- US 101 Operational Improvements, Phase 2, between SLO City and South County.
- SR 227 from South Street to Price Canyon Rd. – evaluating the corridor from South St. to Price Canyon Rd. and providing four-lanes on SR 227 from Tank Farm Road to Los Ranchos Road, including associated pedestrian, bike, landscaping, and other miscellaneous corridor improvements to enhance operations.

For more information on the Project Study Reports referred to in this article, please contact Steve Devencenzi at 781-4662

HEARST RANCH CONSERVATION FRAMEWORK

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments approved a resolution supporting a conservation framework developed by the American Land Conservancy (ALC) and Hearst Corporation that would permanently restrict new commercial and residential development on the 128 square-mile ranch (82,000 acres), protect resources, and increase public access to 18 miles of pristine California coastline.

When implemented, the Hearst – ALC plan will:

1. Retire current and future zoning for new resort developments; eliminate 18 hole golf course and resort at San Simeon Point, no hotel at Hearst Castle Visitor Center, no pine forest equestrian center at Pico Creek, no new areas for resort development would be created outside of Historic San Simeon Village.
2. Limit Old San Simeon Village to Julia Morgan’s vision.
3. Provide permanent public access to the coastline, including 18 miles of new California Coastal Trail.
4. Preserve the working landscape of the agricultural operations while protecting the natural resources through a conservation/agricultural easement.
5. Reduce potential residential development.

Hearst Ranch also represents one of the many exceptional qualities that make the corridor likely to be designated as an All-American Road under the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) National Scenic Byway Program. The SLOCOG Board directed staff to submit a nomination package to the FHWA in February of 2002. An announcement of their decision will be presented at an upcoming SLOCOG Board meeting in either June or August. It is hoped that a national designation for Highway 1 will bring further interest in the success of the conservation framework and easement.

Positions On State Legislation Adopted

At its April meeting, the SLOCOG Board adopted positions on 35 bills of interest to the San Luis Obispo region. Most of the bills are directly related to transportation planning, funding, and implementation; however, several address



Photo Courtesy Hearst Corp.

issues such as general infrastructure finance, revenue sharing, and regional cooperation. Legislation related to smart growth planning and housing has been referred to the Planning Directors Committee for review and will be brought to the Board at an upcoming meeting.

The 2003 State Legislative session is expected to be a particularly difficult one in terms of maintaining funding for existing programs while trying to address new initiatives. Given the significance of the budget crisis, it is highly unlikely that any bill requiring dedication of General Fund revenue will be enacted into law. The bills most likely to succeed will be those protecting gains made in previous sessions – those giving increased options to local governments to raise revenue or those addressing operational issues

Among the bills, most notable in their potential benefits to the region and State and supported by the Board, are the following:

- AB 646 Tax Revenue Sharing Agreements among local governments
- AB 740 \$2.9 billion Clean Air, Water & Coastal Protection Bond Measure
- AB 1500 Petroleum Pollution Cleanup and Prevention Act of 2003
- ACA 9 Switch of General and Special Tax Vote Threshold

- SB 541 Fuel Tax Increase and Indexing
- SB 998 \$1.045 billion Economic Stimulus & Infrastructure Bond Measure

For more information about any of the bills brought to the Board for action at the April meeting or any other legislative issue, call Mike Harmon at 781-5724.

Operating Funds for CCAT's Route 10

In January 2003, Caltrans notified the San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (SLORTA) of a \$19,000 Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 award for Santa Maria/Five Cities/San Luis Obispo bus service. On March 5, 2003, the SLOCOG Board amended the Federal Transportation Improvement Program to include this funding. This award reduces the Transportation Development Act (TDA) draw for the regional transit system.

Draft California Transportation Plan

The *Draft California Transportation Plan* (CTP) has been developed by Caltrans as part of a statewide effort to address the state's transportation needs over the next 20-year period. Workshops to gather input involving members of the general public, transportation experts, providers of transportation services, and elected decision makers have been held statewide (including a meeting in Morro Bay last year). The Draft CTP recognizes a number of issues that must be addressed with commitments to alleviate concerns regarding safety and security; traffic congestion; preserving the investment in existing infrastructure; economic vitality; and the historic, aesthetic, and environmental values of our communities.

Four guiding principles are cited in the plan, including:

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|---------------|---------------|
| Collaboration | Leadership |
| Innovation | Communication |

Mobility (the potential for movement) and accessibility (the measure of time and ease in which destinations can be reached) are also key elements of the plan. The CTP provides goals for the state's transportation system and lays out a series of policies and strategies to address these issues.



SLOCOG identified several issues that need to be addressed more thoroughly in the CTP including:

- Identification of a Financial Component
- State Support for "Rideshare" Activities and Services
- System Improvements and Efficiency
- Environmental Values
- Meaningful Collaboration and Cooperation with Local Agencies

The document is also available in Braille, large print, audiocassette, computer disk, and in Spanish, Cantonese, and Vietnamese. For current information and updates on the Draft California Transportation Plan, please visit the Caltrans website at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/ttp/index.htm>

Regional Priority List for Social Services Transportation Providers Approved

On April 2nd, the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) Board approved the candidate list for replacement vehicles. This year applicants include Work Training Program Inc., Ride-On (the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency), and NCI Affiliates. Included with the vehicle requests was also a request for two-way radios. Usually providers in the region are very successful and receive two to four vans per year.

Every year, Caltrans solicits competitive grants for the Section 5310 program. As part of the process, SLOCOG reviews and scores all applications. SLOCOG

established a team with representatives from the Tri-Counties Regional Center, the Life Step Foundation, and the City of San Luis Obispo Human Resources Commission to review the applications and assign points based upon criteria supplied by Caltrans.

The next step is to forward the regional priority list to Caltrans. Caltrans releases the statewide results in June 2003, and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) adopts benchmark scores for the funded projects in August 2003. The benchmark scores vary year to year and depend on the Federal Budget, the number of requests, and final state scores. There is no guaranteed funding. This year the applicants in the region applied for a total of \$298,000.

If you have any questions about this, please contact Eliane Guillot at 781-5711 or Pete Rodgers at 781-5712

TRANSIT AGREEMENT APPROVED

On April 2nd, the SLOCOG Board approved an agreement with the City of San Luis Obispo and the Regional Transit Agency outlining the procedures and process for programming urban transit funds. Since the early 1990's, the City of San Luis Obispo has been receiving about \$700,000 per year for transit improvements. Federal law requires an agreement between the Metropolitan Planning Organization (SLOCOG) and all eligible operators for the urban area funds. A similar agreement pertaining to the North

County urbanized area is scheduled for SLOCOG Board consideration in June. The Cities of Paso Robles and Atascadero, the County of San Luis Obispo, and SLORTA are transit entities that will benefit from the \$550,000 per year identified for the North County. Please call Peter Rodgers with your questions or concerns at 781-5712.

TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT (TDA) FUND APPORTIONMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2003/2004

SLOCOG approved the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and State Transit Assistance (STA) estimated apportionments for fiscal year 2003/2004 – \$9,672,679. This is a total of \$810,059 more than estimated for the current fiscal year. The TDA provides these two sources of funding for transportation programs. LTF is derived from one-fourth cent of each 7.25 cents collected in retail sales tax. STA is derived from the statewide sales tax on vehicle fuel.

LTF FUNDS BY JURISDICTION	
Jurisdiction	Total
Revenue Deposited & Cash Balance at 7/1 of Fiscal Year	\$9,240,000
Fund Reserve	100,000
Total Available for Distribution	9,140,000
SLOCOG Admin/Planning	663,621
SLOCOG Reserve	100,000
Bikeway Apportionment (2% of Balance) & Bicycle Safety Education	\$178,004
Ride-On Transportation 4.5% of Balance after admin. & bikeway calc.	368,927
Arroyo Grande	514,032
Atascadero	882,788
Grover Beach	414,279
Morro Bay	331,562
Paso Robles	814,299
Pismo Beach	273,578
San Luis Obispo	1,489,317
San Luis Obispo County	3,279,121
TOTAL	\$9,140,000
STA FUNDS BY JURISDICTION	
SLORTA	\$92,458
Atascadero	31,709
Morro Bay	12,304
Paso Robles	29,953
SLO Transit	60,559
*South Bay Dial-a-Ride	16,886
Cambria Trolley	7,062
SCAT	57,848
Ridesharing	17,000
CTSA – Senior Shuttle (Ride-On)	38,250
Lopez Lake and Santa Margarita Lake Shuttles	12,400
CIP	24,820
Unallocated	31,431
TOTAL	\$432,679

*Funding is conditional upon meeting minimum fare box ratio requirement.

FISCAL YEAR 2003/2004 OVERALL WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET

At the March meeting, the Board approved SLOCOG’s 2003/2004 Overall Work Program (OWP) and Budget. The OWP identifies all work elements, major tasks, staffing levels, and products proposed for the 2003/2004 fiscal year. The total budget is \$2,474,482 – a decrease of \$121,568 from the current fiscal year budget. Federal and state representatives reviewed the OWP and budget, and their comments were incorporated.

At the April meeting, the Board approved an amendment to the OWP and budget to include a more detailed work element for the Regional Traffic Model and an added work element for Intelligent Transportation Systems – both to be funded with federal planning carryover funds. The amended 2003/2004 budget total is \$2,524,482.

Regional Traffic Model to Be Developed

At its April 2nd meeting, the SLOCOG Board approved a recommendation to begin the process of developing a regional traffic model over the next 18 months. Development of a model has been moving forward incrementally for many years but has not been pursued in earnest until now due to technical limitations. The decision to move now is due to the availability of a compressive range of data on travel throughout the region, such as the 2000 Census. In addition, recent progress makes

traffic simulation software programs easier to use by community development professions.

A Traffic Model Development Team (TMDT), with primary stakeholders in the process, has been formed, including: public works, community development and planning directors from each city in the region and the county, Caltrans modeling staff, and a representative of the Air Pollution Control District (APCD). The team will meet on a regular basis to review and approve the various steps necessary to develop the model.

The modeling process is building on the work being done through the current PLACE³S program, which is compiling a comprehensive GIS database including a fully digitized layer set composed of every parcel in the region and its zoning. To help prepare for the work ahead, staff recently attended a class on the use of the TRANSCAD modeling software. For more information on the traffic model, call Mike Harmon at 781-5724.

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS MEMBERSHIP (1/8/2003)

Down the Road...The next scheduled meeting of the SLOCOG Board will be held in the San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors' Chambers Wednesday, June 4, 2003. The Board will receive the Regional Profile, Street and Road Standard Assessments, and Performance Measures. The Transportation Development Act (TDA) triennial performance audits for SLOCOG, SCAT, and PRCATS will be presented. Current legislation will be presented. TDA fund claims for 2003/2004 will be presented for approval.

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) is an area wide planning and programming agency for issues of area wide concern. SLOCOG is also the state-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), the Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways (SAFE), and the Census Data Affiliate (CDA) for the San Luis Obispo region. Member Agencies are listed below with designated representatives.

President – Peg Pinard, Supervisor District 3

Vice President – Frank Mecham, Mayor, Paso Robles

Arroyo Grande – Tony Ferrara, Council member

Atascadero – Wendy Scalise, Council member

Morro Bay – Dave Elliott, Council member

Grover Beach – Dave Ekborn, Council member

Pismo Beach – Rudy Natoli, Mayor

San Luis Obispo – Ken Schwartz, Council member

District 1 Supervisor – Harry Ovitt

District 2 Supervisor – Shirley Bianchi

District 4 Supervisor – Katcho Achadjian

District 5 Supervisor – Mike Ryan

Ex-Officio, Gregg Albright – Director, Caltrans District 5

Ronald De Carli, Executive Director

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