

THE COORDINATOR

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

Take a Walk on Creekside Path

Another phase has been completed in Arroyo Grande's Creekside Paths. With a new park/picnic area, brick pavers, landscaping, and restriping the parking lot to add 12 new spaces, the 3rd Phase of Creekside Paths was successfully finished in time to impress Strawberry Festival goers. SLOCOG has been a major funding partner with the City to provide pedestrian improvements adjacent to the creek behind the Village. With the total cost topping \$750,000, the three phases have improved safety, accessibility, and the pedestrian experience. Providing a delicious strawberry punch and cookies, the City hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony. As the primary speaker, Mayor Ferrara extended congratulations to all participants who had a hand in completing this pleasant project.



Byway Dedication Event to be Planned This Summer!

Success! The Federal Highway Administration has notified SLOCOG that this county's national byway nomination of Highway 1 (Highland Dr. to the Monterey County Line) has been approved by the United States Secretary of Transportation, Norman Minetta, as this country's 23rd "All American Road." Congratulations are in order to all of the many organizations and individuals who have worked countless hours to preserve and protect the natural resources of SLO County's North Coast. This designation is in honor of your successes. To name just a few, we'd like to thank the following organizations, businesses, and individuals who clearly laid the groundwork for this national byway designation:

- * Cal Poly School of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- * California Department of Parks and Recreation
- * Caltrans and Federal Highway Administration
- * Small Area Wilderness Preservation Society
- * Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (NOAA)
- * Environmental Center for San Luis Obispo County
- * Cuesta College
- * Friends of the Estuary
- * Cayucos Land Conservancy
- * SLO County Land Conservancy
- * Duke Energy
- * Trust for Public Land
- * East West Ranch
- * Friends of the Elephant Seal
- * Surf Rider Foundation
- * SLO County Visitor's Conference Bureau
- * Chambers of commerce for the communities of San Luis Obispo, Morro Bay, Los
- * Morros Green Belt Alliance
- * Morro Bay Beautiful
- * California Coastal Conservancy
- * Pacific Gas & Electric
- * The Nature Conservancy
- * Chevron
- * American Land Conservancy
- * Hearst Ranch
- * Morro National Estuary Program (NEP)

Osos, Cayucos, Harmony, Cambria, and San Simeon

- * Elected officials and staff from the County of SLO, City of Morro Bay, City of San Luis Obispo, 22nd and 23rd Congressional Districts; 15th State Senatorial District, and 33rd State Assembly District

A dedication event is being planned for later this summer.

Board Opposes Sales Tax for Property Tax Trade Bill

The SLOCOG Board voted unanimously at its June 4th meeting to oppose Assembly Bill (AB) 1221 (Steinberg). Called the California Balanced Communities Act of 2003 by its author, AB 1221 was designed to address the imbalance of jobs and housing occurring in much of the state. To accomplish this goal the bill proposed:

- Swap .5% of the locally levied sales tax for an equivalent amount of state property tax.
- After the base year, each city and county will receive the same amount of property tax received in the prior year, *plus* a share of the property tax attributable to the growth in assessed value within the jurisdiction.
- If future legislation reduces the property tax to local governments in this bill, the sales tax rate would also be reinstated.

The language of the legislation is very complicated, and there are many unanswered questions to be addressed before moving ahead with such a significant change in state finance. It is opposed by the League of California Cities, which is concerned that the proposal is just another opportunity for the state to take local funds. The author had agreed to provide Constitutional guarantees, but this promise did not sway the League or the SLOCOG Board. The bill was subsequently placed in the Assembly Inactive File, and it now becomes a "Two-Year" bill. For more information on this issue, call Mike Harmon at 781-5724.

WATCH FOR NEW TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Next year the SLOCOG Board will be programming new federal and state transportation funding. The federal program (SAFETEA) will be the successor to TEA-21. The state program will be the 2004 STIP (State Transportation Improvement Program). SLOCOG programs a part of the STIP called the RTIP (Regional Transportation Improvement Program). A call for projects will occur in September outlining available funding targets, project categories, and requirements.

The Bush Administration introduced the reauthorization of the federal transportation bill on May 14th. The unveiling of this six-year \$247 billion highway and transit funding proposal – "The Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003" (SAFETEA) – indicates a nominal increase over the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The SLOCOG Board programmed approximately \$10 million of TEA-21 funds in 1998 and 1999 for local and regional roadway projects and an additional \$5.8 million in federal transportation enhancement funds over the same period.

The RTIP is the state program providing funds for state and local projects that SLOCOG programs as part of the STIP. The California Transportation Commission is expecting substantially less funding for this 2004 programming cycle.

SLOCOG staff will be working closely with member agencies to evaluate a number of programming issues, including: 1) decreased state funding, 2) project demand exceeding funding capacity, 3) underfunded projects, 4) the need for scoping additional projects, and 5) the need to reserve funding for scoping projects. The SLOCOG Board is scheduled to approve a regional capital improvement program in February 2004.

Nipomo Groundbreaking

Residents can expect the ground to be shaking over the next few months in Olde Towne Nipomo. Over \$2.5 million will be spent to improve Tefft Street with



curbs, gutters, sidewalks, streetlights, and bulbouts between Oak Glen and Thompson. Advocating funding for downtown enhancements and livability plans, SLOCOG has been a proponent for this project since conception. Funding a scoping study in 1998 and bringing multiple funding sources for construction of the project, SLOCOG is pleased to see this project get underway. Over 100 people turned out for the ceremony on May 22nd,

including: Supervisors Achadjian and Ovitt and former Supervisor Ruth Brackett, representatives of Lois Capps' office, the Air Pollution Control District, the County, SLOCOG, and many of the major participants who supported the project. Expected in November 2003, the completed project will improve safety, accessibility, drainage, and the overall pedestrian experience. The event was made memorable by the performances of the Nipomo High School Band, the National

Anthem by Hailey Boaz, and Ms. Handy's first- and second-graders singing "The Nipomo Song." Many thanks and congratulations should be given to the persistence of the Olde Towne Nipomo Association.

Santa Margarita Lake and Lopez Lake Summer Shuttles

The Santa Margarita Lake Summer Shuttle will begin the last week in June under a contract with Ride-On. The Lopez Lake shuttle, operated by South County Area Transit, connects the Five Cities with the park. Both summer shuttles were promoted with bilingual flyers in the communities and via the Summer Youth campaign.

South Bay May See Transit Changes Next Year!

On June 4, 2003, the SLOCOG Board found the existing Dial-A-Ride is not meeting state performance standards that require 10% farebox ratio. The Board directed staff to work cooperatively with SLO County Public Works and Regional Transit Authority staff to propose a more cost effective transit system. Staff will report to the Board in August 2003. Los Osos residents will not be deprived of transit this year; local DAR and regional buses are still running.

2004 MEETING CALENDAR

At the June 4th meeting, the Board approved the 2004 meeting calendar. If you would like to receive a copy, please call Pene McCullough at 781-4219.

Nipomo Transit

Nipomo Transit, a local Dial-a-Ride (DAR) contract service in place since May 2001, has improved! More regular users and marketing have led to stable ridership (50% above the first year). Still the farebox ratio, at 6%, remains below the 10% state mandate. Without a higher farebox, staff may recommend lifting the Unmet Transit Needs mandate.

The Board approved raising fares in July 2003, seeking supplemental operating subsidies in the community, and expanding the Hispanic outreach and marketing at Allan Hancock College. A status report will be released in October 2003 for subsequent Board action in December.

Transportation Performance Indicators Report

The first Transportation Performance Indicators Report has been developed assessing a variety of transportation measures.

The major findings in the travel behavior of San Luis Obispo County residents compared to the state or nation from 1990 to 2000 include:

- The percentage of the population who drove alone in San Luis Obispo County dropped from 74% to 73.9% versus 78.2% for the nation.
- The percentage of the population who worked at home increased in San Luis Obispo County from 4.3% to 5.6% versus 2.8% for the nation.
- Mean Travel Time to work for San Luis Obispo County increased to 21.1 minutes; this is 4.4 minutes less than the national average. The number of Park and Ride Lots increased by 19%, and the number of spaces increased by 21%. Occupancy rates increased by 13%.
- Ridership on public transit services indicates varying degrees of success and failure. Central Coast Area Transit (CCAT) and dial-a-ride systems ridership increased (8.4%), but the South County Area Transit (SCAT) and SLO City Transit ridership decreased (10.6% and 31% respectively).
- Transit costs are generally consistent, transit service increased significantly, and 40% of the population live within one-quarter mile of a transit stop.
- Passengers on rail service showed no growth and dropped 10.5% in 2002. Ridership on airlines increased five out of seven years between 1996 and 2002.
- Funding was programmed for the full range of transportation related needs in the region – highways, local streets and roads, transit, and rail amenities.
- Vehicle Miles of Travel for California increased by 18.4% and 21% for San Luis Obispo County.
- Average Annual Daily Traffic on Highway 101 increased by a low of 61% in the Paso Robles area to a high of 152% on Cuesta Grade. Accidents on highways are moderately to significantly lower than the average for similar highways in California.
- Five of the eight jurisdictions in SLO County have adopted bikeway plans.

The full report will be available June 27th. For additional information or to order a copy, call Mike Harmon at 781-5724 or Philip Chu at 781-4223.

Scope of Work for Regional Traffic Model Ratified

At its June 4th meeting, the SLOCOG Board approved the Scope of Work to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based Regional Traffic Model (RTM) for the San Luis Obispo Region. The document was prepared with the help of a Model Development Team (MDT) composed of technical staff from each of the seven cities in the region, the County, Caltrans, and the Air Pollution Control District.

SLOCOG intends to employ the new model to enhance the ability of the agency in carrying out its transportation planning and programming responsibilities. SLOCOG has scheduled the model development process to take place over an 18-month period beginning in August 2003. A consultant contract will be presented for SLOCOG Board approval in August. Any questions regarding the Regional Traffic Model should be directed to Mike Harmon at 781-5724 or Philip Chu at 781-4223.

Performance Audits

SLOCOG, Paso Robles Community Area Transit System (PRCATS), and South County Area Transit (SCAT) performance audit findings were presented to the SLOCOG Board on June 4th. Results are as follows:

SLOCOG is in full compliance with two minor exceptions pertaining to the composition, terms, and appointment of the Regional Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC) in its role as the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC). Other recommendations are: participate in the existing operators' working group to foster dialog and improve coordination; monitor transit performance indicators, report results to RTAC and the Board, and assist operators in productivity improvements; better integrate short-term and long-term planning functions and track progress in achieving regional transportation goals; and enhance internal planning with a more structured Overall Work Program (OWP).

PRCATS is in compliance with an exception noted for increases in operating cost above 15% in the first and third audit years. The increases were due to service changes, drivers' wages, and fuel prices; the overall performance has since shown higher productivity and stable costs. The recommendations are: fully implement the transit marketing plan; standardize methods for collecting and reporting transit statistics; consider dedicating additional staff time to manage and administer the system; and track fixed route system performance at the route level.

SCAT is in compliance with an exception in the farebox recovery ratio during the third year of the audit period. Farebox recovery was below 10% due to many service and organizational changes. The one-time grace year is acceptable, and recent trends show a farebox recovery ratio above 12%. Recommendations for SCAT are: use a structured marketing plan to ensure marketing actions achieve the intended purpose; expand public outreach activities and input in the planning process; record and report transit activities consistently; and monitor monthly performance indicators against standards to implement improvements as needed.

The performance audits are a requirement of the Transportation Development Act (TDA). The audits cover a three-year period and are required for transit systems and SLOCOG. The statutes address specified performance measures and mandate the audits evaluate efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the systems with recommendations to address the findings.

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

Down the Road...The next regularly scheduled meeting of the SLOCOG Board will be held in the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors' Chambers Wednesday, August 6, 2003. The Board will review draft programming targets and rating criteria, Community Profiles, and scopes of work for transit studies. The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Plan and Annual Report 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, Mayor

Atascadero – Wendy Scalise, Council member

Grover Beach – Dave Ekbohm, Council member

Morro Bay – Dave Elliott, Council member

Pismo Beach – Rudy Natoli, Council member

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

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



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