

THE COORDINATOR

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SLOCOG Board Approves Submitting Over \$56 Million for 65 Candidate Projects to the California Transportation Commission for Approval

On Wednesday, February 8th, SLOCOG Board approved programming \$56m for 65 projects throughout the County in what is called the 2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). This culminates a seven month long process involving Caltrans, the County, all seven cities, and the Regional Transit Authority.

Funding was recommended for projects to improve highways, local streets, public transit, ridesharing, and bicycle and pedestrian pathways in almost every community in the region. Construction Funding (\$34m+), was directed to address congested highway bottlenecks; \$7.5m in operational improvements, \$6.5 m toward bicycle and pedestrian improvements; \$2.5m toward public transit

The SLOCOG 2006 RTIP will now be submitted to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for final approval. The CTC will conduct a public hearing in Los Angeles on March 9th to review the RTIP's submitted by all Southern California transportation agencies. SLOCOG staff will attend to summarize the region's 2006 RTIP, respond to the CTC staff recommendations, and answer questions from Commission members.

Final approval with any modifications will be scheduled for action at the next SLOCOG meeting on April 5th.

Construction Funding (\$34m+) (note: IC = interchange):

- 46E/101 IC: dual left turn lanes so/bd & new ramps at 17th St, Paso Robles, \$5.7m
- 41/101 IC expansion & enhancement, Atascadero, \$3.7m added (total \$21m).
- 101 South County: 5 new auxiliary lanes in congested areas, \$13.8m added to currently programmed funding (total \$19.8m):
 - So Bd 101 climbing lane SLO Creek Bridge to Spyglass offramp, Shell Beach
 - So Bd 101 Halcyon onramp to Grand Ave offramp, Arroyo Grande.
 - No Bd 101 Oak Park onramp to 4th St offramp, Pismo Beach.
 - No Bd 101 Bello St onramp to Mattie Rd offramp, Pismo Beach.
 - No Bd.101 Grand Ave onramp to Camino Mercado offramp, Arroyo Grande.
- 101 Willow Rd IC (new), \$6m to match local \$, North Nipomo, Tefft St. IC reliever.
- Highway 1, Morro Bay Blvd/Quintana Rd Roundabout, Morro Bay, \$725k added (total funding: \$1.2m)
- 101/Vineyard IC Improvements:, \$1.5m to match \$3.5m local funding, Templeton.

Advance Development Funding (environmental and engineering) (**\$2.9m**):

“Local” Operational Improvement Projects (\$7.5m+)

Public Transit Improvements (\$2.5m):

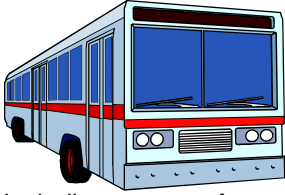
Major Bicycle, Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvement Projects (\$6.5m+)

To see the entire staff report, funding details and project descriptions go to www.slocog.org and click on SLOCOG February 8, 2006 agenda, item, B-3.



“SLOCOG RTIP is by no means final. Modifications may be necessary to address CTC comments once they have had an opportunity to assess total available state and federal funding against all demands for the funding. This is complicated by the fact that different sources of revenue can only be used for certain types of projects” emphasized Executive Director Ron DeCarli.

SLOCOG Board Received Unmet Transit Needs Requests



The SLOCOG Board held its annual Unmet Transit Needs hearing on February 8, 2006. Comments received included providing Countywide evening transit service. Other comments received including requests for transit service in the Nipomo Mesa area, expanded evening bus service, and better connectivity between bus routes.

Staff is currently in the process of evaluating Unmet Transit Needs requests, the first step of which is determining if the request meets the adopted “unmet transit needs” criteria. The second tier of the process is to determine if the request is “reasonable to meet” using existing Transportation Development Act funds. All comments are valuable and those not fitting into the Unmet Transit Needs process are forwarded to the appropriate jurisdiction for evaluation as an operational request. For additional information, contact Philip Chu at 781-4223.



Election of Officers and Recognition

The SLOCOG Board elected Mayor Tony Ferrara of Arroyo Grande as their President and Supervisor James Patterson as the Vice President for 2006. The Board presented a Plaque of Appreciation to outgoing President Shirley Bianchi. The Executive Committee will be comprised of President Tony Ferrara, Vice President James Patterson, and Past President Shirley Bianchi.

Vice president James Patterson will serve as the CALCOG Representative and John Shoals will serve as the Alternate. John Shoals will also serve as the representative to LOSSAN (Los Angeles – San Diego - San Luis Obispo) Rail Corridor Agency & the Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC). Mary Ann Reiss will serve as the Alternate to these Boards.



Caltrans District 5 Director Moves On to Headquarters

At the February 8th SLOCOG Board meeting, Caltrans District 5 Director Gregg Albright announced that he has accepted a job at the Caltrans headquarters in Sacramento. He will be working as Deputy Director of Planning & Modal Programs. Mr. Albright said it has been a pleasure working with the SLOCOG Board and staff. Mr. Albright expressed appreciation to SLOCOG Executive Director Ronald De Carli and staff for all their cooperative efforts and partnership. He encouraged the Board to appreciate their staff, noting that they are a “good team.”

The Board thanked Mr. Albright for all his work with SLOCOG. Past President Bianchi commented that considering Mr. Albright’s accomplishments and contribution to this region, whoever replaces Mr. Albright would have to live up to a high standard. Mr. De Carli noted that Mr. Albright is a champion for collaborative decision-making and context sensitive design. Both attributes are critical to joint cooperative relationship between Caltrans, SLOCOG, and member jurisdictions, in assuring this county remains a special place.



2006 Federal and State Legislative Programs



These programs are designed to provide policy guidance in responding to proposed legislation and administrative policies. The Legislative Program is similar to last years focusing on revenue protection, flexibility, enhancement and improved project delivery.

During the past decade, California and the Nation have been facing an increasingly difficult transportation system improvement problem: funding is not keeping pace with increasing needs, both to maintain the system, as well as to expand it to meet ever-increasing demands. The major transportation issues that must be addressed this Legislative almost entirely involve the provision of adequate funding and reform of the program delivery process.

These issues are expected to be addressed in the upcoming legislative sessions. These recommendations have been developed in cooperation with the League of California Cities (LCC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and other transportation planning agencies.

The **State Program** is based on five priority issues and supporting policies:

1. Government Restructuring and Efficiency
 - Support improved project delivery and more value out of the Caltrans budget consistent with elements of the *GoCalifornia* proposal to improve transportation.
2. Increase Local Funding Options
 - Support authorization to permit a regional road “user fee”.
 - Authorize counties to increase Transportation Development Act revenues.
3. State Funding
 - Protect Proposition 42 funding and seek timely repayment of previous “loans”.
 - Include the CTC funding process in the Infrastructure Finance proposals.
 - Support continued exchange of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for State Highway Account (SHA) funds.
 - Index the state gasoline and diesel fuel tax.
 - Preserve the “spillover” funding for transit operations.
 - Increase state funding for bicycle transportation safety and improvement projects.
4. Smart Growth
 - Support, refine and implement Smart-Growth efforts. Support state legislation to encourage and fund regional visioning; assist in the preparation of local general and specific plans that are consistent with regional objectives; and, provide incentives for compact, infill, and transit-oriented development.
5. Project Oversight and Delivery
 - Seek a predictable and consistent means of distributing state Planning, Programming and Monitoring (PPM) funding.

The **Federal Program** is based on two priority issues:

- Implementation of the transportation reauthorization bill (SAFETEA-LU)
- Amtrak, High Speed Rail Corridors, and Intercity Passenger Rail

The major emphasis of the State Program is the overall transportation funding shortfall with a focus on permanent protection for Proposition 42 funding and the Infrastructure Finance proposals. If you have any questions regarding the Legislative Program please contact Mike Harmon at 781-5724.

HIGHWAY 46 EAST WIDENING PROJECT

Continuing increases in costs for land and construction materials is cutting into the scope of the Highway 46 East Widening project. The project which has been under environmental review for a number of years has seen costs increase dramatically in the past 3 years land acquisition costs estimates for the first three phases of the project (Airport Rd to Shandon Reststop) have risen from approximately \$11M to \$30M, while construction costs have risen from approximately \$85M to \$151M during the same period. The net result of these increases is that currently programmed funding will not construct to the Shandon Reststop as was thought, but only to the Estella River (approximately). The right-of-way costs are a result of the steep escalation of land values in the region, while construction cost increases are the result of steep escalations in asphalt, concrete and steel prices. For additional information, please contact Darren Brown at 781-5764.





COMMUNITY 2050: Planning Tomorrow's Growth Today

State Regional Blueprint Grant for the Community 2050 Program

Funding to proceed with the Community 2050 effort has been approved under the state's Blueprint Grant Program. The approval is for \$226,800 for this fiscal year and tentative approval of an additional \$226,800 for FY 2006/07.

During the fall, the Community 2050 program sponsored a series of sessions that featured discussions regarding growth trends, fiscal resources, transportation, housing, economic vitality, agriculture, natural resources and open space, as well as water supply. Participants were polled regarding their responses to a number of issues. The attendee's responses indicated that their outlook and opinions were consistent with the countywide poll conducted on behalf of San Luis Obispo County's Planning Department last fall. Participants did indicate a slightly higher degree of support for "smart growth" and 'compact development' principles as might be anticipated for an audience that would choose to attend these workshops.

The Regional Blueprint Grant component of the Community 2050 Program will focus efforts on the interaction between transportation and land-use decisions. The Circulation Elements of the member agencies will be reviewed and analyzed regarding their consistency with the Smart Growth principles contained in the RTP. The relationships between housing development practices and policies, the economy and employment patterns and trends, resource capacities, as well as sensitive environments, open space and agricultural protection will be examined relative to their impacts to the transportation network and conversely the effects of the transportation system on them.

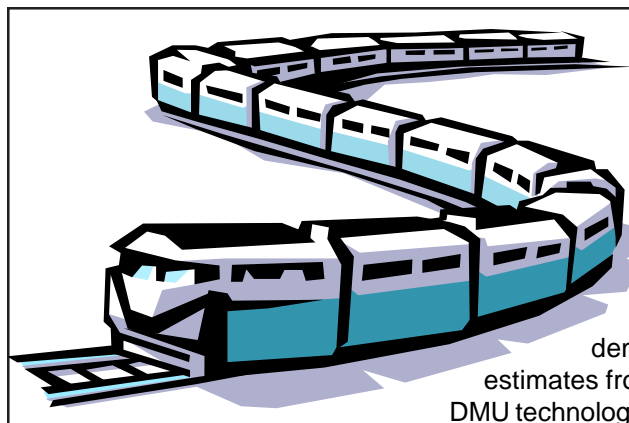
These issues will be included in the updated policy development component of the project during the second phase of the Regional Blueprint Grant Program in the subsequent fiscal year. The results will be utilized to serve as basis for Regional Transportation Plan Amendments that may be needed to support the community goals and objectives derived from this process. Member agencies will be encouraged to integrate these principles and concepts into their planning documents.

Major concepts for the Regional Blueprint Planning efforts as described by Business, Transportation and Housing Secretary Sunne McPeak include:

1. Demonstrate how the Regional Blueprint Planning grant will be used to plan for the region's 20-year housing and employment needs as it relates to the regional transportation plan and improving mobility.
2. Development of a Blueprint Plan as the end product after two years. The Blueprint Plan shall have the following components:
 - Vision for the region developed through public consensus
 - Graphic display and map of the preferred growth scenario or blueprint for the future.
 - Major policies and strategies for meeting the vision in the areas of land use, housing, environmental protection, transportation and economic development.
 - Performance measures.
3. The Blueprint grant will be used to address the *GoCalifornia* goals, objectives and strategies including smart land use.

The grant approval will be for the first year. The second year of funding will depend on performance and products completed in the first year. SLOCOG will be required to submit an updated grant application before July 1, 2006, detailing federal funding eligibility of proposed second year activities and the required local match.

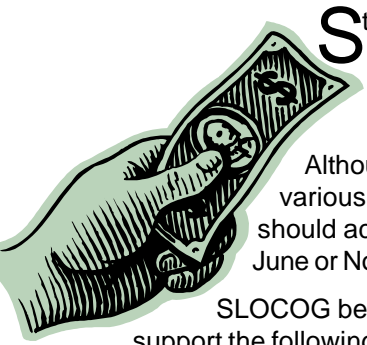
The staff from APCD, LAFCO, County Planning and SLOCOG recently conducted a series of meetings with the Elected Official Steering Committees in each subarea to gather input regarding how we might proceed with the next phases of the program. The Work Program and Budget have been created to reflect issues that were discussed at these meetings. The SLOCOG Board authorized the Executive Director to execute contracts necessary to implement the Work Elements and Tasks within the approved budgetary amounts.



COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE ASSESSMENT!

Research on commuter rail service is underway to assess the potential for and applicability of a commuter rail system in San Luis Obispo County. This research will explore the various components of commuter rail including infrastructure, route and vehicle selection, stations, scheduling, and Diesel Motorized Units (DMU) option. Past and present ridership trends will be examined to project the potential demand and population served by commuter rail. In addition, cost estimates from previous studies will be updated to reflect current conditions with DMU technology.

State Infrastructure Financing Proposals



State legislators have formulated infrastructure proposals over the past legislative session and the Governor came forward with a large-infrastructure financing proposal in his State-of-the-State speech. Both the Governor and the Legislature have made infrastructure investment a top priority for the 2006 legislative year.

Although united in their focus on providing infrastructure funding, there are significant differences among the various proposals on the types of infrastructure that should be funded and the programmatic changes that should accompany the funding. Legislative committees are developing a compromise bill to put on either the June or November ballot.

SLOCOG believes there is merit in components of each of the competing proposals and has urged legislators to support the following principles for inclusion in the final bill.

- 1. Protect Proposition 42 and provide an early repayment of loaned funds.** It is critical to cities, counties and regional agencies to have a reliable, long-term state commitment to maintaining and improving highways, local streets and roads, transit and rail.
- 2. Be fair and equitable to all areas of the state in the distribution of funds.** Projects from carefully considered Regional Transportation Plans are selected by SLOCOG as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency and approved by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for funding under the current process. We support using the longstanding equitable formulas of the North/South Split and County Minimums consistent with the current process for allocating State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) monies. This assures each area of the state will receive an equitable share of funds and allow for the selection of the best projects to address region's needs.
- 3. Provide supplemental revenues to augment bond funding.** Increases in user fees must be considered to advance the state in addressing unfunded transportation needs. Using current revenue streams would require funding now used for "pay as you go" transportation financing to be used for debt service, thus impacting future flexibility and severely impacting STIP revenues.
- 4. Invest in a multimodal transportation system that embraces the diversity of the state.** Any significant bond measure must provide funding for all transportation modes.
- 5. Provide a balance between state and local systems.** Cities and Counties own and operate 81% (137,000 miles) of the State's maintained miles of roadway compared to the State's 15,000 miles. Any significant increase in funding must be shared with all levels of government.
- 6. Supplemental funding should be allocated for specific programs.** These may include major new federal border infrastructure, ports and harbor access, grade separation projects, and major state highway projects that are more costly than could be accommodated with an individual county's share of STIP funding.
- 7. Promote policies and incentives that support livable communities.** Numerous studies clearly show we cannot effectively deal with traffic congestion by simply increasing highway capacity. Any measure must be comprehensive providing incentives to local government to create more balanced and livable communities.
- 8. Expedite project delivery.** Provide authority to employ Design-Build techniques and include provisions streamlining advance development, design and construction procedures.
- 9. Include appropriate mitigation measures and improve project delivery.** Amend California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to reinforce the tiering concept using Regional Blueprints, Regional Transportation Plans and local General Plans to address regional transportation issues.
- 10. Provide adequate funding for intercity passenger rail service in all corridors.** Provide \$40 million for a new train set to increase service on the Coast Rail Corridor and \$70 million for track improvements along the Corridor to improve service speeds and reliability and allow direct service between Los Angeles and San Francisco.



The principles were developed after extensive review of Senate and Transportation Committee staff reports, and position statements developed by League of California Cities (LCC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), California Association of Councils of Government (CALCOG), and passenger rail authorities.





Down the Road...

The next scheduled meeting of the SLOCOG Board will be held in the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors' Chambers Wednesday, April 5, 2006. The Board meetings are broadcast live and replayed on Channel 21 (Charter communications Cable TV)

Individuals wishing accessibility accommodations at this meeting, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), may request such accommodations to aid hearing, visual, or mobility impairment by contacting SLOCOG offices at 781-4219. -Please note that 48 hours advance notice will be necessary to honor your request.

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 federal-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 and their designated representatives are listed below:

President – Tony Ferrara, Mayor Arroyo Grande
Vice President – James Patterson, District 5 Supervisor

Paso Robles – Frank Mecham, Mayor
Atascadero – Wendy Scalise, Council member
Grover Beach – John Shoals, Council member
Morro Bay – Betty Winholtz, Council member
Pismo Beach – Mary Ann Reiss, Mayor
Ex-Officio, Gregg Albright –Director, Caltrans District 5

San Luis Obispo – Dave Romero, Mayor
District 1 Supervisor – Harry Ovitt
District 3 Supervisor – Jerry Lenthall
District 4 Supervisor – Katcho Achadjian
District 2 Supervisor – Shirley Bianchi
Executive Director – Ronald De Carli



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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