

# THE COORDINATOR

1150 Osos Street, Ste 202, SLO, CA 93401

<http://www.slocog.org>

Tel 805-781-4219

Fax 805-781-5703

## Regional Transit Will Test Sunday Service

### Try It In September For FREE!

The SLOCOG Board approved a 6-month trial to evaluate Sunday transit services on the regional system. Beginning September 3rd, three-round trips to/from the City of San Luis Obispo will be provided to/from Paso Robles (RT 9), Santa Maria (RT 10) and Hearst Castle (RT 12). The Sunday schedule will duplicate services now offered on Saturdays.

Sunday's transit services will be expected to generate at least half of the Saturday ridership to be successful. Currently Sunday services are provided in the City of San Obispo and the Five Cities (South County Transit System). Some SLOCOG Board members questioned the productivity and funding needed for Sunday services, but the majority agreed a pilot project is justifiable unmet transit need. The first month of Sunday services will be FREE to passengers to generate interest and ridership. For further information, contact Peter Rodgers at 781-5712.

## Direct Flight to Salt Lake City Proposed



The SLOCOG Board authorized \$25,000 to attract new direct flights to/from SLO and Salt Lake City. These funds represent a local match to leverage \$250,000 in federal funds in support of cost off-sets, advertising and marketing, and revenue guarantees for new Delta Connection air services. With 60% of San Luis Obispo's passenger volume traveling east of Salt Lake City, new direct flights would benefit greatly benefit the community. An announcement of the federal grant award is expected in late June. For further information, contact Peter Rodgers at 781-5712.

## 2006 Public Participation Plan

The 2006 Public Participation Plan is intended to give SLOCOG's elected officials and staff guidance in providing for public participation and interagency consultation in the regional planning process. It contains the policies, guidelines and procedures SLOCOG uses in carrying out the metropolitan planning process. SLOCOG is committed to assuring adequate public involvement in the decision making process. This includes a proactive public involvement process that includes: complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement by the public in developing plans and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs).

An effective public information process not only serves SLOCOG by meeting federal requirements, but also encourages greater participation in the development of programs or projects that may be controversial. The SLOCOG Public Involvement Plan, originally adopted in 1994, was updated in 2002 to address procedures regarding the Internet and *environmental justice* (i.e. consideration of disadvantaged population needs and the potential for disproportionate impacts to negatively effect lower income communities). This update of the plan assures compliance with the current regulations. For more information contact Steve Devencenzi at 781-4226

## Enhancements Projects Move Forward

Morro Bay Harborwalk is to break ground this year! The project that will construct a pedestrian boardwalk along the Embarcadero, north edge of the bay, and out to Morro Rock and the beach. The project will also realign Embarcadero Drive to make room for a class I bike path adjacent to the boardwalk. It will provide unimpeded access and views of Morro and Estero Bay's and Morro Rock. Construction is expected to start in the fall of this year following the Morro Harbor Festival.

Pedestrians along the waterfront can now only walk for relatively small portions of the northern waterfront, however, due to lack of pedestrian facilities and the location of a high-volume street along the harbor front. The project has cleared state and federal environmental review, a key hurdle for projects with federal funding. There is very strong support for the project with funding from Morro Bay, SLOCOG, California Coastal Conservancy, and private interests totaling more than \$3.4 Million. Future phases will continue to improve the boardwalk to the beach north of Morro Rock, and to the south along the Embarcadero.

The fourth in a series of enhancement projects, this phase extends the existing three promenades to connect the Pismo Pier to Main Street. The design includes viewing platforms, seating, lighting, and access to the beach and pier area. Overall, the Promenade projects have secured regional and State funding in the excess of \$3M. Congresswoman Capps has contributed more than 20% of the total funding for the four phases. The Pismo Beach Promenades are such wonderful assets, not only for the City of Pismo Beach but for the entire region. Phase IV adds another link to the Coastal Trail and construction will begin in late 2006 or early 2007. Construction was completed for Phase III in October 2004. In total, with Phase IV the promenade trail will be over 1.5 miles long. For further information, contact Rich Murphy at 781-5754





## FY 2006/07 Unmet Transit Needs Follow up Actions!

At the June 7<sup>th</sup> 2006, staff gave the Board an update on two unmet needs requests evaluated at the April meeting, yet warranting further refinements prior to Board actions:

- A. Service from Villa Paseo in Templeton to Paso Robles (North County); this request was found reasonable to meet by expanding the senior/disabled-only Templeton-Paso shuttle; the Board directed the County to set aside \$16K in Local Transportation Funds (LTF) for the expansion (3 to 6 days a week), plus to conduct outreach to Villa Paseo residents and monitor the monthly performance.
- B. New service between the Nipomo Mesa and the Five Cities (South County); staff had identified this request as an unmet need, likely not be reasonable to meet due to low density and few current generators. The Board wished that the reasonableness to meet be tested "on the ground" and asked that SLOCOG program \$15K in State Transit Assistance (STA) funds for a 6-month pilot bringing Mesa residents to/from designated South County Area Transit (SCAT) stops, using Ride-On as the shuttle contractor. The service (one way fare at \$4.00) is due to start in January 2007 after extensive outreach on the Mesa and marketing by Regional Rideshare.

See other article for details on the regional Sunday Service implementation by the RTA.

## Recommendations from the Joint Transit Maintenance Facility Study Adopted

In June the Board heard the consultants' team presentation on a proposed Joint Transit Maintenance and Dispatch Facility for Ride-On Transportation and the Regional Transit Authority. Both operators currently lease facilities, which lack capacity for future expansion. The final report summarized detailed specifications for combined site and building requirements with an estimated capital cost at \$12 Million (permanent facility recommended at the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase). The associated project benefits translate into future annual operating cost savings at \$550K; the study also includes funding strategies and applicable grant sources with a step-by-step implementation schedule (three phases). The main study findings include:

- **A joint facility is viable** - A joint maintenance facility is viable for both agencies by first consolidating maintenance and bringing administrative functions "under one roof" (1<sup>st</sup> phase);
- **A single facility is cost-effective for both operators** - The project can achieve annual savings over the total costs of two separate facilities with savings larger in later years;
- **Use a joint maintenance contractor** - The preferred organizational structure is a joint maintenance contractor bringing outside, specialized skills to both organizations;
- **RTA should lead** - Key to final implementation (land purchase and construction of a permanent facility (3<sup>rd</sup> phase)) is to secure a financing package with RTA taking the lead;
- **Operators need a Memorandum of Understanding** - As the first step, the operators should adopt a Memorandum-of-Understanding that defines roles, responsibilities plus the level of coordination of shared functions and sets cost-sharing parameters; and
- **Phase in joint dispatching if appropriate** - Due to different Dial-A-Ride operating rules for Ride-On and Runabout, joint dispatch, not recommended in the near-term, will warrant more review after the first 2 or 3 years (recommended at the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase).

The consultant will soon finalize the full study report to be posted at [www.slocog.org](http://www.slocog.org)



## Draft Population & Employment Report Presented

David Bergman of Economics Research Associates (ERA) presented the draft Long Range Socio-Economic Projections (Year 2030) report at the June 7<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. The report integrates recent research carried out by the California Department of Finance and Employment Development Department (EDD), the University of Southern California (USC), and the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).

The consultant is now completing allocation of countywide employment projections into Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ). A preferred future-year population and employment growth scenario will now be selected by SLOCOG staff in consultation with local agencies for integration with the Regional Traffic Model. The final report and the recommended growth scenario will be brought back to the SLOCOG Board at the August meeting for review and approval. For more information on the Socio-Economic Projections and the Regional Traffic Model contact Mike Harmon at 781-5724; [mhramon@slocog.org](mailto:mhramon@slocog.org).

# Outlook for Ride-On Transportation Over the Next 5 Years



The James Transportation Group/McGuire Consultancy team presented findings and recommendations from the 9-month update to the 1999 Ride-On Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP). The team interacted closely with the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council throughout the plan development; the consultant also worked with members of the Ride-On/United Cerebral Palsy in setting the stage for the plan near-term focus.

The consultant's findings are:

- Ridership on Ride-On services fluctuated substantially over the past 5 years partly due to variations in the funding stream.
- Refinements to the agency dispatching function could increase operating efficiencies by evaluating current approach, assessing new software options and identifying needed capabilities for greater automation.
- Potential exists for more integration between Ride-On and the Regional Transit Authority, at first in the fleet maintenance area, ultimately in the dispatch function.
- The largest capital needs are for the Transportation Management Association (TMA) vanpool fleet replacement and expansion.

The 2006-11 Plan strongly recommends that elements of the "Basic Service Level" (no initial expansion, but a menu of refinements to management practices) be implemented immediately to support future expansions (Modest or Substantial levels). There is work to be done in the areas of technical refinement and financial reporting before moving ahead effectively. Ride-On will soon develop a Business Plan for the annual budget preparation, thus setting internal priorities consistent with the SRTP recommendations.

## The Hwy 41-101 Interchange Will Go to Bid in 06/07!



The Hwy 41/101 Interchange project has been one of the most difficult projects in San Luis Obispo County to get funded and completed, and construction hasn't even started yet! Back in April of 2006, the SLOCOG Board requested a Value Analysis be performed to save ballooning construction costs as well as seek engineering improvements to this complex interchange redesign in the City of Atascadero.

A Value Analysis Team met in late April for 6 intense days of project evaluation. The VA team was charged with both cutting costs (the project was \$6m underfunded) on the existing project as well as proposing some project alternatives that would solve the traffic problems associated with the interchange. The team proposed 17 design suggestions to the existing project and 11 alternative designs, 2 of which came forward for full evaluation. In the end, redesign efforts and associated time delays/escalations made both the Roundabout alternative and the Separate Structure

alternative infeasible. The SLOCOG Board is instead seeking cost reductions to the current design of about \$4 million dollars through using asphalt instead of concrete on mainline US 101, reducing some of the earthwork needs and removing colored concrete from the bridge. Estimates show that approximately \$3.1 million will be saved from SLOCOG's RTIP program and about \$900,000 will come from the City of Atascadero to fund project shortfalls. So for the first time in over a year, the project is fully funded and ready to go!

In the end, the Value Analysis process proved very important in saving costs to the interchange. SLOCOG staff and the City of Atascadero will now be working vigorously with Caltrans District 5 over the coming months to get the final touches put on the construction plans and get the project out to bid within the 12 month time extension (preferably 6!) granted by the California Transportation Commission.

Any questions about this article can be directed to Peter Brown, Transportation Planner at 805.788.2104.

## ***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, August 2, 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.

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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 – Tom O'Malley, Mayor*  
*Grover Beach – John Shoals, Council member*  
*Morro Bay – Betty Winholtz, Council member*  
*Pismo Beach – Mary Ann Reiss, Mayor*  
*Ex-Officio, Cheryl Willis –Interim 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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*1150 Osos St, Ste 202*  
*San Luis Obispo, CA 93401*