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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, together with its appendices, constitutes the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the proposed 2005 Monterey Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2005 MTP), the 2005 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan (2005 MC-RTP), and the 2005 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan (2005 SCC-RTP). The purpose of these plans is to coordinate and facilitate the programming and budgeting of all transportation facilities and services within the appropriate jurisdictions within the Monterey Bay region through 2030 in accordance with Federal regulations. The three plans each represent minor revisions of the previous MTP/RTPs developed by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC), respectively.

The 2005 MTP meets federal requirements for transportation and air quality planning (23 CFR, Part 450, Subpart C and 40 CFR, Part 51), through a plan which meets the specific needs and deficiencies of the regional transportation system. Transportation projects and programs as proposed, evaluated and selected at the county-wide level, serve as the basis for the 2005 MTP. In receipt of each county's project list, AMBAG has been assured by the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies of each county that their RTP was developed taking into account transportation need, an evaluation of alternatives to meet that need, and the resultant plan and/or program selection to satisfy transportation need. Arguably most importantly, the RTPs reflect an extensive public involvement and participation process. The sum total is to reflect a transportation system for the region, based on public input, which embraces various modes of transportation in order to efficiently maximize the movement of people and goods within and through the region and to reduce energy consumption and air pollution through the year 2030.

The three plans do not provide project designs or a construction schedule, and adoption of these three comprehensive planning documents does not represent an approval action for any of the individual transportation programs and projects listed in their financially constrained Action Elements. Details relating to the site-specific alignment, location, design and scheduling of the transportation improvement projects which are identified in the three plans are not fixed in, or defined by, these documents. The adoption of the three plans represents an essential first step in qualifying for the receipt of the funding necessary to permit the implementation of the financially constrained Action Element of these three documents. However, the act of adopting the three documents, in itself, would not be sufficient to enable any of these programs or projects to proceed without additional actions on the part of the appropriate agencies responsible for the actual implementation of each individual program and project.

**The Lead Agency in the development of the 2005 MTP and in the preparation of this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG).** AMBAG is responsible for ensuring that the regional transportation planning process is continuing, cooperative and comprehensive. The 2005 MTP has been prepared to meet requirements set forth in the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, the metropolitan transportation planning regulations, and other applicable state and federal regulations. Although only one entity can represent the Lead Agency under CEQA for the preparation of an EIR, in the case of this document the EIR will serve as the CEQA environmental review document for three separate (but related) planning documents: the 2005 MTP, the 2005 MC-RTP and the 2005 SCC-RTP. For this reason, AMBAG, as Lead Agency for the preparation of the EIR, has developed the EIR in close cooperation with TAMC and SCCRTC, with the understanding that TAMC will ultimately act as Lead Agency when this EIR is considered in conjunction with the 2005 MC-RTP, and that SCCRTC will act as Lead Agency when this EIR is considered in conjunction with the 2005 SCC-RTP. Before considering adoption of the 2005 MTP, the AMBAG Board of Directors will consider whether this EIR provides an adequate and complete analysis of the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the 2005 MTP. The EIR must be certified as adequate and complete by the Board prior to any action to adopt the 2005 MTP.

**The Lead Agency for the preparation of the 2005 MC-RTP is the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC).** Before considering adoption of the 2005 MC-RTP, the TAMC Board of Directors will consider whether this EIR provides an adequate and complete analysis of the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the 2005 MC-RTP. The EIR must be certified as adequate and complete by the Board prior to any action to adopt the 2005 MC-RTP.

**The Lead Agency responsible for the preparation of the 2005 SCC-RTP is the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC).** Before considering adoption of the 2005 SCC-RTP, the SCCRTC board will consider whether this EIR provides an adequate and complete analysis of the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the 2005 SCC-RTP. The EIR must be certified as adequate and complete by the Commission prior to any action to adopt the 2005 SCC-RTP.

Within the context of the discussion above, this EIR has been prepared as a Program EIR (rather than a "project" EIR). The transportation system improvements proposed in the three plans can be regarded as a series of geographically-related projects, but for the majority of these projects, it would be premature to make final decisions on their implementation.

The Program EIR is intended to focus on those probable regional environmental effects associated with the implementation of the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans that can be identified now, while deferring analysis of those site-specific impacts which cannot be predicted prior to the preparation of detailed design and/or construction plans for the individual transportation system improvement projects that are identified in the financially-constrained project lists incorporated within each of these three documents. Upon submittal of formal plans for the individual transportation system improvement projects, the Lead Agency for each proposed project

would need to determine the level of additional environmental required to define in detail how the impacts of that project might differ from those identified as resulting from the implementation of the three plans, as described in the Program EIR.

Because the act of adopting the three plans would not, in itself, result in the implementation of any transportation system improvement programs or projects identified in these documents, no environmental impacts would be directly associated with this action. By the same token, the adoption of the three plans would not, in itself, resolve any of the existing traffic deficiencies within the region or result in any transportation system improvements, since this action would be insufficient to enable any of the proposed transportation system improvement programs and projects to proceed. However, adoption of the three plans is necessary to achieve compliance with state and federal laws, and can be regarded as a critical first step in obtaining the funding which will be required to carry out many of the programs and projects identified in the respective financially constrained Action Elements.

The three plans express the priorities of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, SCCRTC, TAMC and their partner planning/programming agencies, for transportation system improvements and programs within the Monterey Bay region. This Program EIR describes, in general terms, the probable environmental effects which may be associated with those expressed priorities on a regional, system-wide basis, rather than on a project-by-project basis.

The Draft EIR incorporates and adds to the information provided in the previous EIRs prepared on earlier MTPs and RTPs, but reflects changes which have been made in the development of the three plans. These changes include slight revisions to policy statements; the deletion of some projects which appeared on previous financially constrained Action Element lists (but which have since been completed or have been dropped from consideration); the addition of new projects to the financially constrained Action Element lists and the Financially Unconstrained Project Lists; revisions of the Financial Element to reflect changes in anticipated revenues; and a new air quality Conformity Analysis on the 2005 MTP.

This Draft EIR identifies measures which appear to be available for, and effective in, mitigating the significant environmental effects associated with the implementation of the programs and projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans. These mitigation measures, as identified, are recommendations to the appropriate agency responsible for the actual implementation of the projects. The identified mitigation measures may be subject to change based on comments received on the Draft EIR during the review period, and on the determination made by the respective governing boards in reviewing the EIR. These decision-making bodies will select the actual mitigation measures to be employed if the 2005 transportation plans are to be adopted, and those measures would then be incorporated in a mitigation monitoring program, as applicable.

The Draft EIR evaluates three alternatives to the adoption of the three plans and the implementation of the financially constrained Action Element programs and projects identified in those documents. In this document, the “No Build” alternative represents a scenario in which no

new construction on transportation system improvement projects would take place in the absence of the three plans, although maintenance of the existing transportation infrastructure would continue. The “Financially Unconstrained” alternative represents a more extensive range of transportation system improvements than anticipated under the three plans, since it would encompass all of the transportation system improvement programs and projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans, as well as all of the transportation system improvement programs and projects identified in the Financially Unconstrained Project Lists of the three plans. A third alternative represents the “Financially Constrained” projects that would be listed in the event that new local revenue sources, like funds generated by new local sales tax measures in Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, do not realize future funding.

For the purposes of environmental analysis, the “No Build” alternative would be regarded as the “environmentally superior” alternative. Since it would require no new construction, this alternative would not entail any of the potentially significant construction-related impacts which might be associated with some of the projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans, or associated with the “Financially Unconstrained” alternative or the “Financially Constrained – No New Revenues” alternative (i.e., conversion of land in agricultural use, noise, dust, alteration in visual characteristics, disturbance of cultural resources, changes in drainage patterns, etc.). **However, the “No Build” alternative would not pursue the goals and strategies of the three plans, and would provide the least efficient and most congested transportation system of all alternatives examined (including the three plans).**

Under CEQA, when the “No Project” alternative has been identified as the “environmentally superior” alternative, it is necessary to identify another alternative which would represent the “environmentally superior” alternative in the absence of the “No Project” alternative. Since the “No Build” alternative represents the “No Project” alternative in this evaluation, another alternative must be identified as the “environmentally superior” alternative in the absence of the “No Build” alternative. The three plans (with implementation of all transportation system improvement programs and projects identified in the financially constrained Action Element only), the “Financially Unconstrained” alternative and the “Financially Constrained – No New Revenues” alternative would all entail the same types of potential environmental impacts. However, the potential environmental impacts which may be associated with these alternatives are not identical.

The “Financially Unconstrained” alternative, with its expanded list of transportation system improvement projects, could be expected to entail more potentially significant construction-related impacts in a greater number of locations than the implementation of the projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans, although the basic character of these impacts (when viewed in terms of each individual project) would be expected to remain about the same. Since all of the projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans are included within the “Financially Unconstrained” alternative, and because the additional projects listed in the “Financially Unconstrained” alternative (see **Appendix C**) could be expected to entail similar types of impacts, but at an increased number of project sites, this would not be regarded as the “environmentally superior” alternative.

The “Financially Constrained – No New Revenues” alternative would result in the implementation of all of the transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans, but due to reduced availability of funding, it would be expected to take longer to complete these projects than currently anticipated. Although the type and magnitude of impacts associated with this alternative would be identical to those associated with the Project, delays in Action Element implementation might be expected to result in some reduction in the potential cumulative environmental impacts associated with project-specific construction activity when listed projects would otherwise be expected to be completed simultaneously within the same general areas (e.g., construction-related water quality impacts, construction-related air quality impacts, construction-related noise impacts, etc.). However, the delay in project completion resulting from funding constraints in the absence of new revenues could also be expected to result in some delays in obtaining the anticipated traffic congestion relief and related air quality benefits that may be associated with such projects. For this reason, the “Financially Constrained – No New Revenues” alternative would not be regarded as being “environmentally superior” to the full implementation of the financially constrained Action Element programs and projects identified in the three plans.

In the absence of the “No Build” alternative, the implementation of the three plans, including all projects identified in the financially constrained Action Element lists in these transportation plans, would be considered the “environmentally superior” alternative.

If the environmental impacts which may be associated with the implementation of the transportation system improvement programs and projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans are determined to outweigh the improvements in the regional transportation system which are anticipated, then the “No Build” alternative must be considered as the “environmentally superior” alternative. However, in balancing the environmental “costs” and transportation system improvement “benefits”, in the absence of the programs and projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans, traffic conditions would be expected to remain unacceptable and deficient along some local roadways. The environmental “costs” associated with the “No Build” alternative are the lowest of all the alternatives examined, but the “No Build” alternative also provides the lowest level of transportation system “benefits” of all the alternatives examined, and would still be associated with potentially significant adverse environmental impacts (most notably, a deterioration in air quality linked to increased traffic congestion).

A “program-level” summary of the potentially significant adverse environmental impacts which might be associated with some of the transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans follows, along with the corresponding mitigation measures. In reviewing this section, however, it is important to remember that these potential impacts are not directly related to the adoption of the three plans. In and of itself, the adoption of these plans would not be sufficient to enable any of the projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans to proceed, and would not result in any adverse environmental impacts. Under CEQA, each of the appropriate agencies responsible for the actual implementation of projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the

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three plans will be required to provide some level of project-specific environmental review for each of the projects listed once such projects have been designed and formally proposed for approval.