

**AGENDA:** January 12, 2012

**TO:** Regional Transportation Commission (RTC)  
**FROM:** Rachel Moriconi, Senior Transportation Planner  
**REGARDING:** 2012 State and Federal Legislative Programs

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC):

1. Adopt the State and Federal Legislative Programs for 2012 (Attachments 1 & 2, respectively), including identification of any new legislative issues the RTC should pursue or monitor in 2012; and
  2. Ratify positions on *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (MAP-21), outlined in a draft letter to Senator Boxer (Attachment 3).
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## **BACKGROUND**

Each year the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) adopts legislative programs to guide its support and opposition of state and federal legislative or administrative actions. Working with its Sacramento and Washington, D.C. legislative assistants and transportation entities statewide, the RTC develops and implements the RTC legislative program, notifying state representatives of the RTC's positions on key issues, and monitoring bills and other federal and state actions that could impact transportation in Santa Cruz County.

## **DISCUSSION**

### 2012 Legislative Programs

The recommended 2012 State and Federal Legislative Programs for the RTC are attached (Attachments 1 & 2, respectively). The draft programs include items identified by RTC advisory committee members and other transportation entities. Proposed additions and deletions from the 2011 Legislative Program are shown in underline and strikeout.

Focus areas for 2012 are noted in the Legislative Programs. As transportation revenues continue to fall far below the needs of the multi-modal transportation system, the RTC will continue to focus on preserving funds dedicated to transportation and generating new, more stable revenue sources. The RTC's Legislative Programs also include a list of projects to prioritize for special funding opportunities that may arise in 2012 (Item 3.a. of the Federal Legislative Program).

**Staff recommends that the RTC review the draft 2012 Legislative Programs, identify any additional issues that the RTC should monitor or pursue in 2012, and adopt the 2012 Legislative Programs (Attachments 1 & 2).**

#### Federal Transportation Act

Development of the new federal transportation act and implementation of the act in California will be a priority for both the State and Federal Legislative Programs. As reported at past meetings, the Federal Transportation Act, SAFETEA-LU, expired in September 2009 and has been extended several times through continuing resolutions. In early November, the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee, Chaired by Senator Boxer, released details on its proposed two-year highway reauthorization bill, *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century* (MAP-21).

MAP-21 includes several positive proposals; however, staff is concerned about potential negative impacts some of the proposals would have for transportation projects in Santa Cruz County, especially changes that could result in redirection of funds from smaller counties to very large Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO). For instance, MAP-21 proposes to phase out smaller MPOs. Additionally, since Santa Cruz County is currently not eligible for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program funds due to changes in how air quality standards are measured, staff is concerned that the proposal to combine the Transportation Enhancement, Safe Routes to Schools, and Recreational Trails programs into the CMAQ program could further reduce funds available for Santa Cruz County transportation projects. Staff recommends that the RTC ratify positions on MAP-21, outlined in a draft letter to Senator Boxer (Attachment 3).

Notably, the EPW bill contains only the highway, research, safety and planning portions of the surface transportation law and would require an additional \$12 billion. The Senate Finance Committee is currently working on a solution to filling that gap with not much success. The transit section of the bill is being drafted by the Senate Banking Committee. On the House side, Congressman Mica, Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (T&I) announced that a bill will be marked up sometime in January, but that date is expected to slip until February.

#### **SUMMARY**

Staff recommends that the RTC adopt the 2012 State and Federal Legislative Programs, which guide its support and opposition of state and federal legislative or administrative actions. The 2012 Legislative Programs continue to focus on preserving and increasing funding for transportation projects in Santa Cruz County.

#### Attachments:

1. Draft State Legislative Program
2. Draft Federal Legislative Program
3. MAP-21 Draft Comment Letter