



## Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 2, 2012

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## **Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) votes to defer local road repair funding measure**

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission voted 6-5 today to not place a local \$10 vehicle registration fee measure dedicated for local road repairs, safe routes to schools, and accessible sidewalk projects on the November 2012 ballot. While recognizing that current resources do not provide adequate funding to maintain the local street and road system at the level necessary to adequately serve the public, given that meeting the two-thirds voter threshold requirement is incredibly challenging without a robust campaign, the RTC voted to defer taking the measure to the voters this year.

The RTC directed staff to continue working with the broad cross-section of the community that has demonstrated strong support for addressing transportation funding shortfalls; to provide information to the public on transportation needs and costs; and to build on the momentum of these efforts to evaluate a range of funding options, including pursuing new local, dedicated funding sources at a future election.

While the RTC voted to defer pursuing new local funding for transportation in this upcoming election, it was acknowledged that:

- There is strong recognition of need for infrastructure improvements and acknowledgement that local streets and roads serve all sectors of our community.
- There is strong recognition that local streets and roads need more maintenance.

- There is a growing understanding that doing nothing results in worsening road conditions leading to even more costly repairs/reconstruction.
- A coalition of broad interests has formed to support the pursuit of self help status in an acknowledgement that state and federal sources for road maintenance are inefficient, shrinking, unreliable, and can be diverted to other uses. For example, fuel taxes have not been increased since 1994, buying power has diminished by over 30% due to inflation, there is less revenue due to increased vehicle mileage and aging roads have increased maintenance needs over time.
- Many community organizations and community leaders are eager to endorse new local transportation funding strategies.
- Polling indicates that approximately 2/3 of likely voters would support the proposed \$10 Vehicle Registration Fee measure. However, to maintain this 2/3<sup>rd</sup> support will require a significant campaign.
- Local jurisdictions, the RTC, and community groups are working together to increase public awareness of the cost to operate and maintain the existing transportation system, and the inability of existing funding sources, such as fuel taxes, to pay for local road repairs and multimodal improvements.

Several commissioners that voted against the deferral expressed interest in giving voters the opportunity to do something to fix more roads, stating that waiting will result in worsened conditions that will cost more to repair later.

The RTC will continue seeking assistance and input from the community on strategies to address local transportation needs, especially as part of the development of the long range Regional Transportation Plan over the next year. The RTC will also review implications and potential opportunities for addressing transportation priorities through the recently approved federal transportation act (MAP-21).

*The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is responsible for delivering a full range of safe, convenient, reliable, and efficient transportation choices for the community. While promoting long-term sustainability, the RTC provides transportation services, planning, and funding for all travel modes. Information about the Regional Transportation Commission's projects and programs can be found at [www.sccrtc.org](http://www.sccrtc.org) or by calling 831-460-3200.*