

THE COORDINATOR

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Happy Anniversary SLOCOG – 40 years!

On October 2nd the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) held a dinner in Pismo Beach to celebrate the 40th anniversary of its establishment. The dinner was attended by 172 guests, including city and county elected officials, State legislators and their representatives, other government agencies, private organizations and other distinguished public.

The event was hosted by SLOCOG President, Mayor John Shoals of Grover Beach. Gracious appreciation went out to the organizations and companies that sponsored the evening, including: PG&E, the Association of General Contractors (AGC), the SLO Builders Exchange, Union Asphalt, Papich Construction, and Souza Construction.

SLOCOG Executive Director, Ronald L. De Carli then reviewed the history of the agency remembering milestones, accomplishments and highlighting projects including the expansion of Cuesta Grade and the Route 46 East widening. He remarked on how the agency had played a major role in the establishment of public transit services throughout the region, and how it had funded bicycle and pedestrian facilities, passenger rail improvements, and how it had helped in the acquisition of high priority open space.

Richard Krumholz, District Director of Caltrans District 5, then spoke about the cooperative relationship that exists between SLOCOG and Caltrans, the many accomplishments that have been achieved during the past 40 years, and the challenges that we now face.

The keynote speaker, Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee, spoke of his experiences serving the people of the Central Coast in the State Legislature. He noted with pride how he has strived to be a centrist, working across aisles to achieve what is best for the region.

A comprehensive history of accomplishments is available on the SLOCOG website ("About Us" page). To request a hard copy, contact Mike Harmon at 781-5724.

Fix 46 Committee Honored at SLOCOG Board Meeting



For more than 12 years, Mary Chambers and a dedicated group of north county citizens, known as the Fix 46 Committee, have been working with SLOCOG, Caltrans and our State Legislators to improve safety on Route 46 East. The dedication and hard work that this group of civic minded individuals has succeeded. To show the region's appreciation for Mary Chambers and the other Fix 46 members, the SLOCOG Board presented them with a resolution of appreciation at the October Board meeting. The committee members include Robert E. Chambers, Blanche Comino, Ann Ormonde, Richard and Felicia Lambert, Steve Ormonde, Linda Williams, and Joy Sprague. In 1995, Mary began reaching out to then State Senator Jack O'Connell, County Supervisor Harry Ovitt, the California Highway Patrol, Caltrans District 5, and the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments.

State Budget Overview

At the October 8th meeting the SLOCOG Board was given a summary briefing of the implications the newly adopted State budget will have on transportation planning and programming.

Ron De Carli, Executive Director, noted that the budget could have been far worse for the region in terms of transportation funding. He was pleased to note that the budget includes the full allocation of \$1.4 billion in Proposition 42 funding. This action assures that agencies in the San Luis Obispo region will receive a total of over \$9 million for local and regional transportation improvements, allocated as follows: \$3.4 million to the County and \$1.4 million shared by the cities for local street and road maintenance, \$3.7 million to SLOCOG for State Highway improvements, and \$285,000 for transit service. The highway funding was critical, in that any cut could have resulted in the need to revisit the 2008 RTIP, possibly delaying work on all of the projects, such as the widening of Route 46 East.

October Board Briefs...

SB 375

At the October meeting the SLOCOG Board was briefed on SB 375 (Steinberg), the newly enacted State Legislation that builds on previous climate change legislation, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32). Using our regional "blueprint plan", Community 2050, staff will include a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) into the next Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update. SB 375 encourages planning on a regional scale, in a manner designed to reduce vehicle use and associated greenhouse gas emissions. Following are some of the most important changes in land use and transportation planning that SB 375 requires:

1. Regional Emissions Targets. - By September 30, 2010, the Air Resources Board (ARB) must establish greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for each region.
2. The Regional Transportation Plan - The RTP must now include a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), which includes a development pattern, which, when integrated with the transportation network and other transportation policies, will reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles and light trucks to achieve the regional emissions targets.
3. Regional Housing Needs – The bill requires the regional housing needs assessment to reflect the achievement of a feasible balance between jobs and housing within the region, and that the allocation of housing share to each individual city and county must be consistent with the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS).
4. Rural Sustainability – Requires the MPO to consider financial incentives for cities and counties that have resource areas or farmlands, and for counties that implement policies encouraging growth to occur in cities.

For more information on SB 375 contact Mike Harmon at 781-5724.

Transit Funds Tighten

The SLOCOG Board was notified at its October meeting that Transportation Development Act revenues are declining. These funds are needed to operate the current level of Regional Transit buses and local transit systems.

Regionwide Fare Study Findings

Since February 2008, the Majic Consulting Group has evaluated current fare policies for all transit providers in the region and developed several proposed improvements. The study Steering Committee, made of representatives from the public transit, education and social services sectors, has met every two months. The team reviewed interim findings and draft recommendations, listed below:

1. Implement a Regional Day Pass (NEW) accepted and available on all systems with the elimination of the regional transfer;
2. Re-design Regional Monthly Pass (Existing) to enhance its multi-provider identity;
3. Eliminate Universal Pass (coupon book accepted on all transit modes since 1998);
4. Establish Uniform Discount Policies (seniors, children and disability eligibility rules);
5. Provide Consistent Transit Information (namely common template, printed and web formats) facilitated by Regional Rideshare;
6. Expand Purchase Options (such as web store opportunities and broader coverage for outlets);
7. Consider Uniform Farebox Technology (capital investment to handle more flexible fare media); and
8. Standardize Fare Media (reciprocal acceptance of fare media or new media recognition)

Most pertinent to the feasibility of those recommendations dealing with shared media among providers will be the definition of equitable revenue-sharing options. Those will be examined in the upcoming months. Recent activities have been to gather feedback from riders and non-riders via focus groups in North, South and Central parts of the County. Other stakeholders' input was secured during drivers' interviews, meetings with transit contractors' managers and social services agencies' supervisors familiar with the needs of their clients. At the October 2008 meeting, the Board accepted the information and directed staff to bring back final recommendations in December 2008.

Annual Report Available

SLOCOG Annual Report has been approved for distribution. To see what happened in the region during FY 2007/2008, visit the SLOCOG website at www.slocog.org or call SLOCOG at 805-781-4219 to get a hard copy.



Rideshare Week was October 20-24th. Over 700 SLO County residents showed their Peace, Love, Rideshare by pledging to walk, bike, bus, carpool or vanpool during the week. Rideshare staff passed out snacks to bus riders and walkers and held a breakfast on the Bike Boulevard to celebrate commuters.

Rideshare is a member of the Green Awards Committee, whose purpose is to promote and recognize San Luis Obispo County's greenest businesses and non-profits. The committee includes representatives from various organizations including ECOSLO, APCD, City of San Luis Obispo, Ride-On, SLO County Agricultural Commission, Integrated Waste Management Authority and the SLO Chamber of Commerce. The official call for nominees was made on September 25th at Good Morning San Luis Obispo. 71 nominations were received. In recognition of the awardees, a luncheon will be held at the Congregation Beth David from 12:00-1:30pm on November 13th.



Senior Transit Options Outreach

Since August, six presentations have been presented to 116 seniors, with eight more scheduled through November. The presentations include information about the program, tutorials on how to navigate the various transportation options (i.e. transit, shuttles, carpools) and even field trips on various transit routes in the county. Rideshare is also conducting one of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) courses through Cal Poly.

More Money for Safe Routes to School

The Second Cycle of Federal Safe Routes to School funding has been announced! In the San Luis Obispo region, two grants were awarded (totalling \$393,730):

- The City of Arroyo Grande received \$259,000 to complete sidewalks around Ocean View Elementary School
- SLOCOG received \$134,730 to provide non-infrastructure activities and programs for two years

In addition to these two new grants, the San Luis Obispo region has received 7 grants totalling \$2.8m (5 State and 2 Federal) for infrastructure around schools. These infrastructure projects will make it safer for students to walk and bike to local schools.

The Rideshare division of SLOCOG continues to provide non-infrastructure support for schools in the region. This support includes a yearly workshop, mini grants, bike skills seminars and assemblies, and other resources.

The most recent workshops were held on October 28th and 29th in Atascadero. The workshops covered garnering support in your community, holding a walk/bike to school day, conducting a walk/bike-ability assessment, and writing a successful Safe Routes to School Grant.

Presentations from the workshops, as well as other school resources that Rideshare provides can be found at www.rideshare.org, under the schools link.

For more information about Safe Routes to School and other bike programs at SLOCOG, contact Jessica Berry at 781-1385.

Transportation Choices Program

SLO Regional Rideshare, APCD, SLO Bike Coalition, Ride-On, and RTA have revamped the Transportation Choices Program (TCP), focused on employer and employee alternative transportation outreach. During the month of July, the program increased by twelve area employers, bringing the total number of employers to 75, with 592 employees actively participating. Informational materials are being updated and expanded to include a TCP Kit for new employers, a brochure, TCP Information Boards, a new and improved webpage, and more frequent Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) communications. Not only does this program create cash in employees' pockets, but it positively impacts our community.

Hop onto the Paso Express!



After recognizing the need for more local outreach and greater visibility in the community, the City of Paso Robles had secured a Federal transit grant, awarded via the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments. The grant-funded marketing plan recommended creating a more unified image for the local system and a stronger identity for the fleet, bus stops, and transit brochures as well as on the internet. This led to the re-branding of the "old" Paso Robles City Area Transit System (PRCATS) into the new "Paso Express". The official unveiling of the new logo with a distinct black, burgundy red and gold design displayed on the recently re-branded buses took place on October 7th at City Hall.



Down the Road....

The next scheduled meeting of the SLOCOG Board has been moved and will be held in the San Luis Obispo City Council Chambers Wednesday, December 17th, 2008. 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 – John Shoals (Grover Beach)

Vice President – Bruce Gibson (District 2 Supervisor)

Arroyo Grande – Tony Ferrara, Mayor

Atascadero – Tom O'Malley, Council member

Morro Bay – Janice Peters, Mayor

Paso Robles – Fred Strong, Council member

Pismo Beach – Mary Ann Reiss, Mayor

San Luis Obispo – Dave Romero, Mayor

Ex-Officio, Richard Krumholz –Director, Caltrans District 5

District 1 Supervisor – Harry Ovitt

District 3 Supervisor – Jerry Lenthall

District 4 Supervisor – Katcho Achadjian

District 5 Supervisor - James Patterson

Executive Director – Ronald De Carli



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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