

THE COORDINATOR

1114 Marsh Street San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

www.slocog.org

Tel 805-781-4219 Fax 805-781-5703

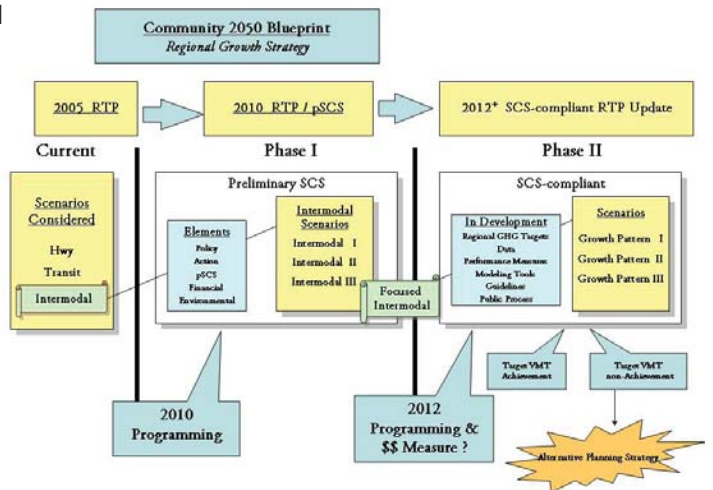
Regional Transportation Plan Update

SLOCOG's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) guides decisions on project and program funding to create a transportation system that is accessible, safe, efficient, effective and reliable. The current plan (adopted in April 2005) considered both the short and long-term future and provided policy guidance for citizens as well as local and state officials in its identification of anticipated projects and funding.

Updating the current RTP is necessary because the 5 year period for renewal under state and federal transportation law expires in 2010. State law also requires that we adopt and submit an updated RTP to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and Caltrans to be eligible for various funding sources. The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) calls for mechanisms that lead to real, quantifiable reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. Senate Bill 375 (SB 375) requires the state's Air Resources Board (ARB) to develop regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets to be achieved from altered transportation and land use practices described in a "Sustainable Communities Strategy" (SCS).

The SCS is intended to describe a framework that shows how we can better connect land use and transportation choices, reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the region and demonstrate the ability for the region to attain ARB's reduction targets for carbon emissions in California to 1990 levels by 2020. SLOCOG is carefully examining compliance with the spirit and intent of this legislation.

The chart (left) describes a two phase process toward achieving the state mandated GHG targets using the current RTP to refine the intermodal framework of the 2006 RTP and transition to an SCS compliant RTP that further refines the intermodal approach.



Three key elements are required in the RTP: Policy, Action, and Financial.

The Policy Element presents guidance to decision-makers regarding the implications, impacts, opportunities, and options that will result from implementation of the RTP. The existing policy framework is focused on the overall vision of maintaining "A fully integrated and intermodal transportation system which facilitates the safe movement of people, goods, and information within and through the region." The intermodal/integrated focus will be the basis of scenarios evaluated for the 2010 RTP with the focus placed on strategies to reduce VMT and more fully integrate land use, housing and transportation policy frameworks.

The Action Element serves as the RTP's implementation strategy and is linked to projected revenues and costs in the Financial Element. The Action Element sets forth a plan of action to address issues and needs identified in accordance with the Plan's goals, objectives and policies.

The Financial Element identifies the current and anticipated revenue sources for planned transportation investments and ongoing maintenance and operations. The RTP must be financially constrained. The lack of a locally controlled dedicated source of funds beyond developer fees leaves little opportunity to match increasingly competitive state and federal sources. The financially constrained and reasonably anticipated element of the 2010 RTP, assumes no new transportation sales taxes or new bond measures.

2009 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment

The SLOCOG Board approved an amendment to the 2009 Transportation Improvement program that added new projects including twelve transit projects ranging from operating assistance to capital improvements such as bus fleet replacements. Other new projects included State Highway safety improvements including the programming of a median barrier on Highway 101 within the City of Paso Robles. A total of 31 projects were adjusted in this amendment totaling over \$18 million in increased funding for projects in the San Luis Obispo County region.

Census 2010 is coming!

On October 7th the SLOCOG Board took several actions to begin the final stage of preparations for the Decennial Census which culminates on National Census Day on April 1, 2010. These actions included adoption of a proclamation of support for the Census, formation of a Complete Count Committee, and approval of a Census Partnership Program agreement. Since SLOCOG is the designated Census Data Center Affiliate for San Luis Obispo County, it is responsible for



a number of census related tasks, and one of the most important is to help assure

that the 2010 Census is successful. This means helping to assure that all residents are accurately counted.

A key element to making the 2010 Census a success is the public outreach communication program. This is designed to reach every population group in every part of the nation to promote participation in the census. The challenge the public outreach effort faces is that some population segments are much more difficult to motivate than others. In order to assure a more robust public outreach process, the Census bureau is providing grants to fund Partnership Support Programs (PSP). "Partners" are eligible for a grant of up to \$2,999 for the purchase of products or services to support outreach activities.

The campaign will run from mid 2008 through June 2010. Outreach activities in 2008 and most of 2009 were focused on preparing and mobilizing partnerships. Communications are now being delivered by Census staff and through partnerships, to ethnic, economically disadvantaged, and single persons. Efforts to communicate with these population groups will begin first because they require a longer education process to overcome the barriers that inhibit them from participation. To help assure that the 2010 Census is completed successfully SLOCOG staff have developed a website to provide the most current information about the census and other information.

For more information call Mike Harmon at 781-5724.

Dip in Sales Tax Revenue hurts Transit and Streets & Roads Projects

On October 7th the SLOCOG Board learned that revenues from sales tax receipts is 15% lower than expected during the first quarter of the fiscal year. The Transportation Development Act provides ¼ cent of sales tax revenue for transit and streets and roads purposes in San Luis Obispo County, which until recently totaled over \$10 million per year. The funding available this fiscal year is estimated at \$9 million.

"Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding is the bread and butter for local and regional transit" staff asserted. "Funding cuts of this magnitude are significant". The Regional Transit Authority was requested to reaffirm, or modify its TDA funding needs. Because the Regional Transit Authority takes TDA funds for transit before the local jurisdictions, the specific local impacts are yet to be defined.

Local cities that spend all (or nearly all) TDA funds on transit (SLO, Morro Bay, Paso Robles) will likely see the most severe cuts in transit services. In December SLOCOG staff will share specific transit service cuts anticipated.

SLOCOG Open House

SLOCOG Board, staff, and public celebrated the new SLOCOG office at 1114 Marsh Street on October 7th, 2009. This new location will be the future meeting place for all Transportation Advisory Committee meetings. The office has 2 conference rooms, houses all SLOCOG and Rideshare staff, and has a ground level lobby for general inquiry and walk-in visitors.



2010 Project Programming

Every two years SLOCOG programs funding for projects in the region under the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Preliminary work on the 2010 STIP cycle is underway. SLOCOG staff have met with jurisdictions to discuss the status of currently programmed projects, funding shortfalls, and future needs. The SLOCOG Board, in October, approved the funding targets and policies for the upcoming programming cycle. The funding targets and policies are outlined here:

Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP): no new capacity.

- Try to advance currently programmed projects that are ready to go; e.g. Los Osos Valley Rd. Interchange.
- At a minimum, maintain currently funded RIP projects in the fiscal year in which they were programmed in the 2008 STIP.
- No “New starts” for major surface transportation projects. Local or other non STIP funding is expected to fund environmental and engineering phases.
- Evaluate other funding programs (e.g. STP) to develop project initiation documents (PIDs) for major regional surface transportation projects (e.g. Union Rd./SR 46 IC) so plan lines and right of way can be secured sooner than later, minimizing capital costs later.

Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP): New Capacity \$4.7 M.

- A portion of RSTP funds converted to SHA funds and allocated by formula to member agencies for local road rehabilitation projects.
- Maintain \$1.5m in RSTP funds (fy 9/10 regional shares) committed to the Santa Maria River Bridge Widening project (SLOCOG Board Action – August Item) and reassess in February 2010 to determine if funding commitment should be maintained.
- Set aside \$200,000 of RSTP funds (fy 10/11 regional shares) for SLOCOG agency wide programs.
- Establish a RSTP funding target of \$550,000 (fy 10/11 regional shares) for scoping and project initiation studies.
- Program balance of RSTP funds (Minimum Target: \$750,000 – Maximum Target: \$2,250,000) on capital improvements

Transportation Enhancement Program (TE): New Capacity \$1.9 M

- Review current TE program of projects and determine funding needs for regionally significant projects.
- Circulate a “call for projects” and develop a project list using adopted criteria for review and programming in February 2010.

SLOCOG Cost Retainment and Recovery Plan

The SLOCOG Board considered and adopted a Cost Containment and Recovery Plan at their October meeting. Executive Director, Ronald De Carli presented the plan. The Plan was prepared with staff input as a proactive measure in response to the continuing decline in state and local revenues. He noted that further budget cuts or staff reductions are unlikely providing revenues continue at recently projected levels. He noted any further reduction in revenues will be very problematic. He recommended and the Board adopted a dual focused plan aimed at reduced costs, and securing maximum revenues.

Major non-work force cost containment and recovery strategies include:

- Continue to reduce or contain operating costs.
- Minimize the number of Special Meetings.
- Reduce travel expenditures.
- Aggressively pursue new grants and assure the capture of admin fees.
- Pursue the use of member agency in-kind contributions for local match requirements.

He noted staff is aggressively pursuing all of the above strategies. He emphasized the untapped opportunity to document and use local staff time (referred to as in-kind match) as the local match on appropriate state and federal grants, versus hard local revenue.

The second component focused on work force strategies for controlling costs, including:

- Hiring freeze.
- Reduction of temporary employees.
- Voluntary work reductions.
- Deferring or suspending negotiated cost-of-living adjustments.
- Work force reduction through mandatory days off, hour reductions, or layoffs.

Mr. De Carli noted the agency has already implemented the first strategies, and is closely monitoring revenues and costs to determine if further mandatory time reductions are necessary. This would be reported to the Board in future sessions.

For further information please contact Ronald De Carli at 781-4219

2009 Transit Needs Assessment

At the October Board meeting an update to the Transit Needs Assessment was given. This annual assessment of the size and location of identifiable groups likely to be "transit-dependent" is done prior to the Unmet Transit Needs review. Such groups include, but are not limited to seniors, persons with disabilities, individuals eligible for ADA paratransit and other specialized services, persons with low income and students.

The update highlighted several improvements made since 2008. Those were respectively:

- New capital projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grants for fleet replacement, passenger amenities and electronic fareboxes;
- The upgrade of several transit and park-and-ride facilities in the Five Cities area;
- The Regional Ride Guide map issued by Regional Rideshare;
- The re-branding of the Paso Robles transit system;
- The introduction of the Regional Day Pass on all fixed-route buses;
- The sale of monthly-31 day passes on line;
- The Senior Transportation Options continued outreach; and
- The availability of Google Trip Planner for the SLO Transit system, soon to be expanded to the regional RTA system.

The assessment identified areas in need of improvement in the current program. Those areas included:

- Provide more reliable connections between systems to improve or increase inter-community travel options
- Increase opportunities for making transfers with more consistent schedules and service spans and better information
- Establish more uniform policies on fare discounts offered to seniors, persons with disabilities and children.
- Improve the quality of transit information and expand the outreach for greater service awareness and better understanding of travel options
- Increase the responsiveness to mono-lingual Hispanic customer base

The transit ridership update showed the following trends:

- Over the last 9 years, overall ridership (all modes combined except trolleys) grew by 38% from 1.79 Million in FY 2000/01 to 2.46 Million riders in FY 2008/09.
- Fixed-route ridership (at 80% of the total demand) grew the most by 48% in 9 years.
- Local Dial-A-Ride (DAR) ridership (at 5% of the total demand) declined by more than 15%. Over time in some areas like Paso Robles demand shifted from local DAR's to local fixed-route.
- In 2008/09, total ridership on all systems combined was up 8.4% above the prior year, a rate 20 percent above the average annual historical growth for the region. The main factor driving this recent trend is the 22% growth in regional bus ridership, itself associated with high gasoline prices.

The socio-economic review compared several variables at the City or community level. Those included the following:

- Total population and residential densities;
- Transit-prone age groups (numbers of youth below driving age and seniors over 65);
- Size and location of the persons with disabilities in relation to the total population;
- Social service clients by area and program;
- Number and share of lower-income households;
- Size of the labor force (number of jobs) and unemployment rate;
- Number and share of Limited English Proficiency Persons;
- Profile of English Learners students from the local school districts
- Number and geographical distribution of students and
- Vehicle Ownership (households without a private vehicle).

The level of service currently provided was compared to the transit potential derived from the socio-economic profile. Transit Services and Transit Potential are fairly similar, thus indicating the transit levels of service currently provided may be adequate overall with the possible exception of the Five Cities.

Unmet Transit & Bikeway Needs Hearing Scheduled for December 2nd, 2009

The SLOCOG Board officially kicked-off the 2010/11 Unmet Transit & Bikeway Needs study at their October 7th meeting by formally adopting the methodology and criteria used to determine an "unmet transit need," and "reasonable to meet." The Board also approved the 10/11 Unmet Transit & Bikeway Needs Hearing Schedule.

Due to a 15% reduction in FY 09/10 Local Transportation Funds (LTF), expanding transit services in FY 10/11 will be difficult while retaining existing service levels.

In an effort to be more proactive in addressing funding challenges next fiscal year, the 2010/11 Unmet Transit & Bikeway Needs Public Hearing is scheduled to be held on Wednesday December 2nd at 8:30 AM in the San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors' Chambers.

Throughout the year staff accepts and documents all requests received over the telephone, by fax, mail, or e-mail. For the current study, staff will conduct extensive public outreach to announce the hearing date in an effort to encourage greater public participation. The hearing process provides the public an opportunity to formally request new or expanded transit and bicycle-related services within SLO County. Additionally, staff will continue meeting with interested groups to receive input prior to the hearing date.

The last day to submit unmet transit or bikeway needs requests for the 2010/11 study is Wednesday December 9th.

For additional information, please contact Tim Gillham at 781-1520 or e-mail tgillham@slocog.org

\$1.6 Million of Proposition 1B "Transit" and "Safety & Security" Awarded!!!

The SLOCOG Board recently awarded \$1.6M for 5 transit capital projects and improvements. Additionally, the Board approved setting aside \$900K in FY 2010/11 Prop 1B "Transit" funds as a reserve for three "big ticket" projects: Atascadero Transit Center, Grover Beach Train Station expansion project, and a Local/Regional Transit Terminal to be located in San Luis Obispo. The following projects were approved for FY 09/10 Prop 1B funding:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| One Low-Floor Vehicle for Paso Robles Transit..... | \$147,382 |
| RTA Maintenance Facility..... | \$799,168 |
| One RTA Transit Coach..... | \$400,000 |
| SLO Transit Bus Radio System..... | \$205,000 |
| RTA Bus Video System (partially funded)..... | \$61,787 |

The Board also authorized \$14,733 in unused FY 07/08 and 08/09 Prop 1B "Transit" funds for 3 minor transit capital projects for the following jurisdictions:

Atascadero – Transit Vehicle Yard Improvements
Morro Bay – Radio/Tools
SLO County – Bus Stop Improvements (North County)

For additional information, please contact Tim Gillham at 781-1520 or e-mail tgillham@slocog.org.



Rideshare Month '09 San Luis Obispo County www.rideshare.org

Rideshare Month 2009

Rideshare is challenging the way San Luis Obispo County thinks about their commute this October during the Commute for Cash Challenge - Rideshare Month, 2009. Rideshare Month is a multi-modal campaign to encourage SLO County residents to try an alternative to driving alone. In the past, the annual campaign was a week long and Rideshare asked participants to pledge to take an alternative mode of transportation at least once during that week. This year however, Rideshare has turned the campaign into a month long team challenge where participants log their trips at www.rideshare.org and win their commute savings in cash.

To participate in the online challenge, teams of 2-5 people register at www.rideshare.org and log their trips and miles made/reduced by bus, bike, carpool, vanpool, walk or telecommute. To be eligible for prizes, teams must have at least one new user of alternative transportation (meaning they typically use an alternative mode no more than twice per month). Each time a team member enters their trips online, the system automatically calculates their commute cost savings as well as the amount of harmful emissions that they are reducing by not driving alone. At the end of the week, teams who have logged at least one trip by an eligible mode are entered to win their teams' commute cost savings in cash (up to \$75 per individual). In addition to daily prize drawings, each week an individual is also randomly selected to receive \$100 just for participating.

The Rideshare Month Kick-Off Event occurred at the San Luis Obispo farmer's market on October 1st and included live music, a bicycle museum, a walk-in vanpool and the opportunity for members of the public to paint a SLO Transit bus. In addition, October 5th-9th was Ride the Bus Free Week on all fixed-routes in the county. Over 600 goodie bags were distributed at major transfer stops to encourage individuals to try transit for the first time. October 12th-16th was Vanpool Week and Team Cone Zone Commuters received ipods for the entire van by winning the Rideshare Month Vanpool Contest. October 19th-23rd is Carpool Week and gift certificates will be randomly given away daily to carpoolers taking the challenge. Lastly, October 26th-30th is Bike/Walk Week with Energizer Stations and bicycle safety information offered throughout the county.

To register or learn more about Rideshare Month – Commute for Cash Challenge, simply go to www.rideshare.org.

Bus Passes Now Available Online

In August, Rideshare launched the first online transit store and regional pass outlet center in San Luis Obispo County. Located at www.rideshare.org, the online store allows commuters to purchase monthly bus passes from fixed-route transit operators in the county. The purpose of the online service is to make taking the bus more convenient for the commuter, specifically those who cannot make it to a regular pass outlet during normal work hours. Using PayPal, a secure site, customers simply enter their contact and payment information online and the transit pass(s) are mailed directly by Rideshare staff within two business days. Passes are charged a \$1.55 shipping and handling fee to cover Rideshare staff time and postage plus a 2.9% Pay Pal charge per transaction (around \$2.50 per pass). PayPal accepts most credit cards and e-checks; no cash is accepted. Daily and discounted passes are not available online but will remain available at regular pass outlets. The online pass outlet at www.rideshare.org has the following monthly passes on sale: SLO Transit 31 Day Pass, RTA ONE Pass, RTA GO Pass, Region ALL Pass, Paso Express Monthly Pass and SCAT Monthly Pass. The online store is the only pass outlet in the county selling every monthly and regional pass and is accessible 24-hours, 7 days a week. For more information and to view the online store, go to www.rideshare.org.

New!
Purchase Your
Monthly Pass
Online
www.rideshare.org



Workplace Bike Sharing Program

In August, Rideshare launched San Luis Obispo County's first Workplace Bike Sharing Program. Made possible by a generous donation of twelve bikes by the San Luis Obispo County Honor Farm, the program is offered to businesses and organizations throughout San Luis Obispo County with the goal to provide an easy, fun, healthy and sustainable way for employees to get around during the work day. The service is an extension of Rideshare's Transportation Choices Program, a commuter focused program that helps employers promote sustainable transportation options at their workplace. The program is free for organizations and Rideshare supplies each participant with two bikes (one women's, one men's) two helmets, two locks and sample liability waivers. In return Rideshare asks that all program participants attend a one hour bicycle safety workshop hosted by the San Luis Obispo County Bicycle Coalition and submit mileage/bike usage information to Rideshare quarterly and upon request.



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

1114 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
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The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) is an area-wide planning and programming agency for issues of regional 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 – Tom O'Malley (Atascadero)

District 1 Supervisor – Frank Mecham
District 2 Supervisor – Bruce Gibson
District 3 Supervisor – Adam Hill
District 4 Supervisor – Katcho Achadjian
District 5 Supervisor – James Patterson
Executive Director – Ronald De Carli

Arroyo Grande – Tony Ferrara, Mayor
Morro Bay – Janice Peters, Mayor
Paso Robles – Fred Strong, Council member
Pismo Beach – Mary Ann Reiss, Mayor
San Luis Obispo – Jan Howell Marx, Council member
Ex-Officio, Richard Krumholz –Director, Caltrans District 5

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, December 2, 2009. The Board meetings are broadcast live and replayed on Channel 21 (Charter Communications Cable TV), at www.slo-span.org.

Public Hearing Items

One public hearing item is scheduled for December 2, 2009

- The Unmet Transit and Bikeway Needs Hearing. More information is available on Page 4 of this newsletter.

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.

