



MAY 10, 2007

AGENDA ITEM # **13**

**METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR 2035 –
COMMENTS ON DRAFT REVENUE ASSUMPTIONS AND PROJECT LIST**

Action Requested: Discussion; policy direction

Key Staff: Brian Williams, Executive Director

Recommendation

Review staff's comments on the draft revenue assumptions and project list prepared for the pending update of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan; provide policy direction.

Background

Under federal law, SACOG is responsible for preparing a long-range regional transportation plan for its six-county planning area. The plan covers a minimum of 20 years, and is updated every 3 years. It must be "financially constrained" in that only those transportation projects and programs for which funding is reasonably expected to be available may be included in the plan. During 2006, SACOG conducted a series of workshops to obtain public input on regional transportation priorities. SACOG staff is now transforming that input, along with assumptions on future land uses and travel demand, into the Draft *Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for 2035*.

Discussion

STA staff has provided input to SACOG staff on two draft MTP work products of particular relevance to the STA in its capacity as administrator of Sacramento County's Measure A ½-percent transportation sales tax program:

1. **"Measure B:"** For Sacramento County, the draft MTP revenue assumption assumes passage of an additional ¼-percent Countywide transportation sales tax in 2016. Most of the associated revenues would be used to expand and operate Regional Transit's bus and light rail network. RT staff has indicated that such a measure is essential for any measurable expansion beyond its current system. They also report that expansion efforts will be halted if such a measure does not pass by 2012. Several counties in California have dedicated transit sales taxes (e.g. BART) in addition to their broad countywide transportation sales tax programs. Last year, your Board reviewed a draft work plan for bringing a supplemental transportation funding measure to ballot, but did not take action on it.

SACOG staff bases its assumed ¼-percent increment on "*stated local intent to pursue another measure and favorable polling showing public approval under specified conditions.*" To date, your STA staff is unaware of a formal action taken by any local policy board in Sacramento County to pursue a supplemental transportation funding measure. We have also not seen any credible research on voter reaction to such a measure. It will be difficult to conduct such research until the MTP nears adoption, and the public can clearly see which project priorities do not fit within the reasonably anticipated level of funding during the 28-year planning horizon.

At this time, your Board does not need to declare its intent relative to if, or when, it will pursue a supplemental local transportation funding program. Certainly, prior to the next MTP update in 2010, however, some formal determination will need to be made. The draft MTP revenue assumption does not forecast new transportation sales taxes in any other county, so passage of an additional ¼-percent measure would place Sacramento County's rate ¾-percent above all of its neighbors. Staff has recently begun to evaluate and quantify possible alternative local transportation funding scenarios.

2. Project List: The **New Measure A** ordinance and expenditure plan was approved on November 2, 2004 by over 331,000 Sacramento county voters (75.3%). It provides partial funding for 55 roadway and transit capital projects or project phases. The draft MTP project list currently being distributed for public agency review omits two of the local arterial projects and redefines two of the bus/carpool lane projects:

Local Arterials

City of Sacramento – **Folsom Blvd** streetscape improvements (65th/Power Inn – Watt)
Unincorporated County – **Sunrise Blvd** corridor improvements (Madison – Gold Country)

Bus/Carpool Lanes

US 50 (Sunrise – Downtown): Draft MTP depicts western terminus at Watt
I/5 (Downtown – Elk Grove): Draft MTP depicts southern terminus at Cosumnes River Blvd.

SACOG staff has tentatively reported that the two local arterial projects can be included in the funding constrained list once the project scopes have been refined by the sponsoring entities. The two carpool lane projects remain a point of discussion, however, even though the longer segments were included in the last update of the MTP. Indeed, the STA satisfied the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reporting requirement for the **New Measure A** expenditure plan by demonstrating that it was entirely consistent with the MTP.

With their overwhelming support for **New Measure A**, voters expressed confidence that public agencies would aggressively pursue delivery and construction of the listed projects and programs. Adopting a regional plan that omits or changes some of the projects would belie the public's trust. By doing so, the prospects for voter support for any future local transportation funding programs in Sacramento County become extremely compromised. It also makes the affected projects less competitive for state and federal matching funds.