



DATE: June 15, 2011
TO: STA Board Workshop
FROM: Daryl Halls, Executive Director
Elizabeth Richards, Director of Transit and Rideshare Services
Sam Shelton, Project Manager
RE: Funding of Local Priorities such as Safe Routes to School, Senior and People with Disabilities Mobility, and Local Streets and Roads

Background:

STA successfully builds top priority projects using funds from outside agencies.

As the Congestion Management Agency (CMA) for Solano County, the STA helps identify countywide priority mobility projects and approves distributions of federal, state, and regional funding. For example, I-80 highway projects such as the recently completed carpool lane in Fairfield, highway pavement rehabilitation between Vallejo and Vacaville, and the North Connector project in Fairfield were funded through combinations of bridge tolls, proposition 1B bonds, and federal stimulus funding as prioritized by the STA. When other federal, state, and regional agencies conduct “calls for projects” making their discretionary funding available, the STA has successfully set competitive priorities and developed shovel-ready projects that obtain these grants. Through this process, 59% of STA top priority highway and transit projects are funded through state funds, 23% through regional funds, 5% federal funds, and 7% local funds. This strategy currently helps advance about \$813M of \$3,147M in STA top priority highway and transit projects.

Countywide Local priorities remain unfunded or rely on unstable grant funds

When local priorities are not eligible for outside agency grants, or when grants are limited to start-up pilot projects, these local priorities are left unfunded or become unstable once grant funds are expended. Locally, the STA Board has focused on three local mobility priority areas. These are Safe Routes to School (SR2S), Senior and People with Disabilities Mobility, and Local Streets & Roads. Below are brief descriptions of each area’s issues, current program status, and program stability.

1) Safe Routes to School (SR2S)

As more students stop walking and bicycling to school, traffic congestion and student obesity rates increase. Between 2007 and 2010, over 58% of Solano County students are being driven to school by their parents while 22% walk and less than 2% bicycle to school. The STA’s SR2S program helps encourage more students to walk and bicycle to school by educating students about walking and bicycling safety through school site events, encouraging students with school contests and prizes, enforcing the rules of the road by collaborating with police officers, and funding engineering improvements where routes to school could be safer. During the 2010-11 school year for program staff held 81

events for over 18,000 students at 26 schools. Schools that coordinated and marketed SR2S events closely with program staff experienced nearly 100% student walking and bicycling during week-long contest periods. The STA's SR2S Program is fully funded until the end of FY 2012-13, where the program could be reduced to one-quarter of its scope, covering less than 25% of schools countywide with fewer services.

2) Seniors and People with Disabilities Mobility

Solano's senior population is projected to increase dramatically in the near future, with the number of residents over 65 nearly doubling by 2035. Current funding for mobility services for seniors and persons with disabilities primarily comes from Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding. TDA, which is generated from a portion of countywide sales tax, has declined significantly in the past few years due to the State's struggling economy. It has declined to a level of about five years ago. TDA is also the primary funding source for fixed route service operations and capital match. Solano County transit operators provide an array of services for seniors and people with disabilities including discounted fares on fixed-route service, local buses with low-floors or kneeling buses, Americans for Disabilities (ADA) paratransit services, and local subsidized taxi programs. In 2010, the initial phase of a subsidized ADA intercity taxi service was begun by the transit operators. More in-depth information of public, private and non-profit transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities is included in the draft update of the Solano Transportation Study for Seniors and People with Disabilities. Conducted over the past year, the Study involved extensive public outreach throughout the county. Transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities were identified and strategies to address them have been prepared. The Study concludes with an Implementation Plan for these short, medium and long-term strategies. Funding is currently not available to implement most of the strategies.

3) Local Streets and Roads

Between 2006 and 2010, about 32% of roadway pavement countywide (about 1,000 lane miles) is considered to be in "at-risk, poor, or failed" condition. These are roadways that experience extensive cracking and potholes that allow water to deteriorate the roadway at faster rates and slow the speed of drivers navigating these hazards. Pavement in this condition can no longer be repaired by relatively cheap means. Deferred street maintenance costs for these roadways can balloon from \$35,000 per mile to over \$1.8M per mile if neglected for as little as five to seven years.

Percent of Lane Miles Considered "At-Risk, Poor, or Failed" by Jurisdiction

47%, Benicia (88 lane miles, 24% worse since 2006)
19%, Dixon (24 lane miles, 2% worse since 2006)
17%, Fairfield (121 lane miles, 3% worse since 2006)
68%, Rio Vista (31 lane miles, no data)
31%, Suisun City (46 lane miles, 24% better since 2006)
13%, Vacaville (71 lane miles, 5% worse since 2006)
55%, Vallejo (374 lane miles, steady since 2006)
36%, County of Solano (332 lane miles, 5% better since 2006)
32%, Countywide Weighted Average (1,090 lane miles, steady since 2006)
34% of the Bay Area's roads are in similar condition.

As cities keep the total number of deteriorated lane miles steady, the number of roadway miles in Solano County in “fair” condition doubled from 209 to 452. “Worst first” street maintenance strategies focus on roadways in the poorest conditions while allowing good streets to degrade to poorer conditions. These “fair” roads can quickly become the baby-boomer generation of expensive at-risk pavement, potentially increasing the number of Solano’s deteriorated lane miles by 40% in less than five years. However, the number of roadway miles in Solano County in “fair” condition doubled from 209 to 452. These roads can quickly become the baby-boomer generation of expensive at-risk pavement, potentially increasing the number of Solano’s deteriorated lane miles by 40% in less than five years.

On average, California cities pay about 71% of street rehabilitation project costs with local funding while counties depend on state funds for 56% of street rehabilitation project costs. Federal funds contribute between 6% to 10% of street rehabilitation funding.

A Spring 2010 poll of 804 voters conducted by EMC Research showed that each of these three areas polled as high priorities in all Solano County cities. 75% of those polled believed that there was some need or great need for additional funding for these three areas.

Spring 2010 Poll Results Summary

Percent of polled voters that considered the following areas as a high or very high:

- 66%, Safe Routes to School for Children
- 62%, Repairing and Maintaining Streets and Roads
- 59%, Fixing Potholes
- 57%, Disabled Persons Transportation Programs
- 54%, Senior Transportation Programs
- 53%, Make it easier to bike, walk, and take public transit
- 53%, Funding for Crossing Guards

Discussion:

Sam Shelton will present more detailed information regarding each local agency’s Safe Routes to School Program status (Attachment A) and each local agency’s street rehabilitation investments (Attachment B). After reviewing the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s (MTC) recent publication “The Pothole Report: Can the Bay Area Have Better Roads?”, STA staff recommends additional research and annual reports that highlight Solano County’s deteriorating roadway conditions. Specifically, geographic information system (GIS) data can help map and analyze specific streets with poor conditions to assist in project planning and funding requests.

Elizabeth Richards will discuss some preliminary findings of the draft “Solano Transportation Study for Seniors & People with Disabilities” (Attachment C).

Workshop Discussion:

1. Are these three areas still the countywide focus for local priorities?
2. Are there other local priorities that should be considered by STA for further analysis?
3. What are the options for addressing these local priorities?

Attachments (provided under separate cover):

- A. Safe Routes to School Countywide Summary and City Status Fact Sheets
- B. Solano County Local Streets and Roads Local Agency Facts Sheets
- C. Draft Executive Summary of the Solano Transportation Study for Seniors & People with Disabilities, June 2011