

REPORT TO SHASTA COUNTY RTPA

SUBJECT	MEETING DATE	ITEM NUMBER
Accept 2002 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) Project Prioritization	2/26/02	6

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Agency accept the attached 2002 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) project prioritization as submitted to the California Transportation Commission (CTC).

SUMMARY

Due to a lack of programming capacity in the early years of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) (see Figure 1), Shasta County has been asked to submit a prioritized list of its RTIP projects to the CTC by February 25, 2002. Table 1, developed in consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee, lists RTIP projects in order of priority and moves some project programming out one to two years (see Figure 2). The final prioritized list and cover letter submitted to the CTC will be provided at the Agency meeting.

BACKGROUND

Based on prior direction from the Agency, staff developed the 2002 RTIP. The RTIP proposed programming of \$40 million in new transportation projects to be developed by the three cities, the County and Caltrans over the next five years. This was based on an approximately \$10 million advance in addition to our \$30 million County share. Upon approval by the Agency in December, the RTIP was forwarded to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for incorporation into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) scheduled for adoption April 4, 2002.

Approval of RTIP projects in the STIP constitutes a commitment, or line of credit, by the State to fund the listed projects once requested by the local delivering agency. This line of credit generally applies to the year in which the project is programmed; however, the CTC may fund projects in earlier years at their discretion and subject to available funds.

DISCUSSION

The CTC has amassed all RTIP proposals submitted Statewide and determined that project proposals in the early years of the five-year program far exceed programming capacity (see Figure 1). The CTC will be moving programming for most Shasta County projects out two or more years. Although the decision regarding which projects are delayed rests entirely with the CTC, they have requested agencies to submit a prioritized list of its RTIP projects by February 25.

The CTC will consider Shasta County's highest priority projects, but only to a limited extent. Local priorities are likely to be overshadowed by Statewide

priorities and programming capacity constraints. This prioritization exercise is not required by the CTC. In the absence local priorities, however, the CTC will unilaterally move projects to the out-years of the RTIP.

While Shasta County's initial guarantee of \$30 million in new project programming over five years is not in jeopardy, our ability to front-load programming in the early years is limited. This front-loading by Shasta County is consistent with the Statewide trend. In Shasta County's case, it is necessary due to three major Caltrans projects that have neared completion of the environmental phase and are now ready to program construction. These projects are as follows:

Major Projects Proposed in Early Years of 2002 RTIP	2002 RTIP Cost (thousands)	Total Cost (thousands)	Const. Year
SR 299 Auxiliary Lane and Bridge Widening @ Sacramento River	\$14,629	\$29,658	FY 03/04
SR 299: Widen Liberty St. to Auditorium Dr. (Caltrans)	\$7,178	\$10,114	FY 03/04
Downtown Couplet	\$4,566	\$4,566	FY 04/05
Total	\$26,373	\$44,338	

Programming for the above projects alone represents 87% of the Region's county share. This programming is requested within the first three years of the 2002 RTIP. These projects have been, and remain, among Shasta County's highest priorities. The CTC may be receptive to leaving these projects in the early years of the STIP because they are consistent with several important Statewide principles as follows:

1. They are on State Highway Focus Routes which are designated as the highest priority highways in California.
2. Collectively, the three projects represent a 60% Regional Improvement Program fund match to State Interregional Improvement Program funds. This exceeds average Statewide matching contributions between regional agencies and Caltrans.
3. The environmental review processes for each of the projects should be completed this summer.

Even if the CTC delays the above projects by one year, Shasta County would still be in an excellent position to receive funds much earlier than most regions. Early funding for large projects is important in light of cost escalations and traffic congestion over time. The boost to the local economy derived from early delivery of these major transportation projects must also be considered.

Similar to regional prioritization, Caltrans will need to prioritize projects on the State Highway system. At the time of this writing, it has not been determined where the three Shasta County State Highway projects rank on the statewide priority list. This information should be available prior to the RTPA meeting and will be provided to Agency members. The attached Table 1 may be revised pending Caltrans input.

Pursuant to the CTC's request, Table 1 (attached) lists adopted 2002 RTIP projects by priority, and recommends moving many projects out one to two years. Original programmed years are indicated in Table 1 by outlined cells. Priorities are as follows:

#	Priority	Affected Projects*	Reason
1	Prior carryover from 2000 RTIP	Cypress "A" and "B", Stillwater Extension	CTC Guidelines guarantee continued programming
2	Cost overruns for prior programmed projects	Cypress "C"	Stated CTC priority
3	Planning, Programming and Monitoring Funds (\$310,000)	Exclusively used for early development of 2002 RTIP projects	Stated CTC priority
4	Completion of projects receiving prior, partial programming (by delivery date)	SR 299 Auxiliary Ln. SR 299 Liberty St. SR 299/273 Couplet	Consistent with 2000 RTIP programming priority and stated CTC priorities
5	Other RTP competitively selected projects (by rank)	Bonnyview Widening Hilltop/SR 44 Overcrossing	Consistent with 2001 RTP priorities
6	Downtown Redding projects	Downtown Mall Downtown Grade Separation	Environmental-only funds requested. Projects will take long time to develop
7	Base allocation projects (by delivery date)	Cities and County base allocation projects	CTC stated lower priority. Lack of State-only funds until 2004.

*See attached Table 1 for complete project descriptions

These priorities reflect guidance issued to date by the CTC regarding Statewide priorities, and local priorities which were developed through the

Regional Transportation Planning process. As part of the RTP, projects were selected and ranked based on various cost-benefit criteria.

Base allocation projects were ranked chronologically based on originally proposed delivery schedules. Many base allocation projects were also moved back two years since most requested State-only funds and Caltrans has discontinued the State-only fund program until at least 2004 due to insufficient funds.

The time-line for further CTC action regarding the STIP is as follows:

Dates (2002)	Action
February 25	Regional Agencies and Caltrans deadline to submit recommendations to the CTC regarding project priorities and moving projects to later years
April 4	CTC adoption of STIP
May	Where desired, regions submit amendments to the STIP to change project priorities. Changes may be limited only to internal swapping projects within the region
June 13	CTC provides notice of proposed amendments
July 18	CTC takes action on proposed amendments

After adoption of the STIP, the CTC will only allow agencies to air their grievances through the STIP amendment process. STIP amendments will likely be limited to the swapping of projects within the region. For example, a project in an early year can be moved out to advance a project from a later year.

Staff intends to bring this item back to the Agency at the April 23rd meeting with recommendations for STIP amendments, if any.

ALTERNATIVES

The Agency could revise the priorities submitted to the CTC. This exercise would be more appropriately timed after the April 4th STIP adoption. In light of severely limited programming capacity, it is certain that projects will be moved out additional years beyond what staff has recommended in Table 1, and despite local priorities. Again, staff will bring this item back to the Agency at the April 23rd meeting to consider further reprioritization in light of the CTC action.

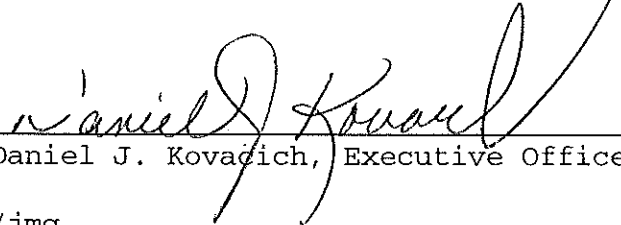
OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Table one was provided to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for review and comment. While the agencies were understandably displeased with State management of the STIP, they concurred that the priority list in Table 1 represented the best chance to receive STIP funds for important projects in the region earlier rather than later. The TAC also recognized that these recommendations will have only limited weighting at the CTC level and CTC

action will likely delay projects significantly further than what has been recommended.

FINANCING

The issue of programming capacity by year has an effect on when, not if, projects are to be funded. Staff's goal is that major projects that were competitively selected through the Regional Transportation Plan be delayed no more than one year, and that base allocation projects be delayed no more than two years. Actual delays could be one or two years longer. STIP projects are funded from state and federal sources generated by taxes levied on fuel.



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Attachments: Figure 1
 Figure 2

FIGURE 1

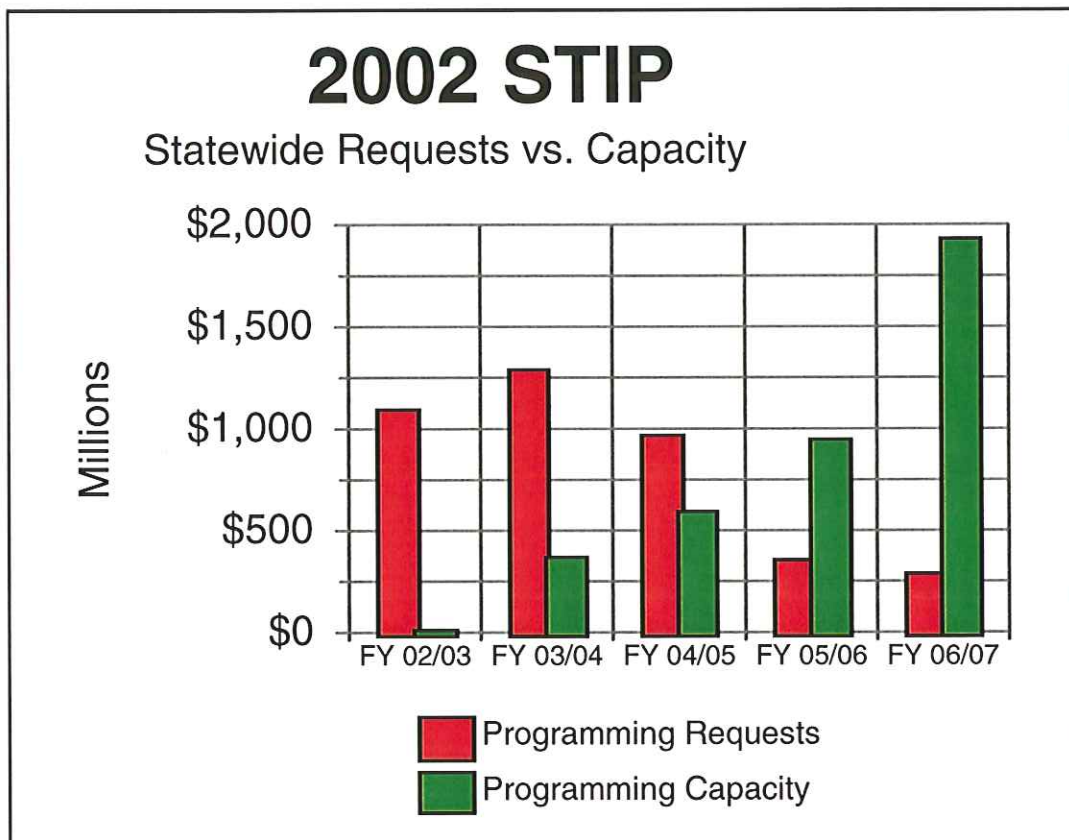


FIGURE 2

