RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION: (Policy Item: Yes___ No_X_)

Authorize the Board Chairman to Sign the Agreement to Allow the County to Participate in the 2001/2002 Optional Federal Apportionment Exchange and State Match Program for Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) Funds.

Staff is requesting that the Board authorize the Chairman to sign the Agreement with Caltrans to exchange federal funds earmarked for transportation under the TEA-21 legislation for nonfederal State Highway Account funds. The minimum amount to be exchanged is $157,715 from the Federal Government. Including the state match of $78,858, the total amount of funds provided available to Roads will be $236,573.

Because federal transportation funds must comply with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), this exchange will allow the County Road Division more discretion in spending as the funds will be exchanged for state-only dollars. For more detailed information regarding RSTP, please refer to Attachment #1. This exchange program is offered to jurisdictions such as Mariposa County to allow the best use of transportation funds without placing undue restrictions on expenditures.

Time is of the essence as indicated by the deadline imposed by Caltrans of May 28, 2002.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

The Road Division has relied heavily on the annual RSTP exchange dollars for general maintenance for several years. This exchange has occurred on an annual basis since the inception of the Surface Transportation Program in 1991.

LIST ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Negative action will result in the Road Division not being able to utilize the RSTP funds effectively because of onerous NEPA requirements and because the County may not have enough projects that qualify for federal transportation funds. Lack of positive action may delay receipt of the exchange funds.
REGIONAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (RSTP)

Description The Surface Transportation Program (STP) was established by the 1991 Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and continued with the passage of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the TEA-21 Restoration Act in 1998. Both new Acts are jointly referred to as TEA-21. Funds are directed to projects and programs for a broad variety of transit and highway (includes streets and roads) work. Eighty percent of the STP apportionment is distributed among the urbanized and non-urbanized areas of the State through Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs).

Project Eligibility Eligible Federal-aid projects include the following:

- Highway projects; bridges (including construction, reconstruction, seismic retrofit and painting); transit capital improvements; carpool, parking, bicycle and pedestrian facilities; safety improvements and hazard elimination; research; traffic management systems; surface transportation planning; transportation enhancement activities and control measures; and wetland and other environmental mitigation.

Funding Level Estimated annual program level is $320 million.

- Federal share payable = 88.53% (100% if safety related, and 80% for bicycle or pedestrian related projects).

Project Selection Process Projects are proposed by local agencies and the State for selection by RTPAs and MPOs in cooperation with the State. Projects must be included in an approved Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP).

- The District Local Assistance Engineers assist local agencies in obtaining Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) authorization for environmental engineering, right-of-way, and/or construction funding based on the project's schedule and cost in FSTIP.

Significant Dates The schedules for project nomination vary statewide. Please contact your MPO or RTPA to verify the schedule.

- October of each year - apportionment of Federal funds is released.
- July 1 of each year - MPOs and RTPAs notify the department of projected amount of obligational authority (OA) each entity plans to use the remainder of the FFY. Excess amounts are redistributed to other projects.
- August 1 of each even-numbered year - the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) is updated to include new projects.
1 FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Relevant Statutes
Title 23, U.S.C.
Title 49, U.S.C.
California Streets and Highway Code, Section 182.4, 182.6.

Key Decision Makers
RTPAs and/or MPOs, FHWA, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Contacts for Information and Assistance
Caltrans District Local Assistance Engineers (see Attachment B) for projects not on the State Highway System.
MPO/RTPA list (see Attachment C).
Caltrans Transportation Programming Program for projects on the State Highway System and in the STIP: Chief, Office of Federal Programs Management at (916) 654-4843.

Related Publications


"Guidelines for Matching Regional Surface Transportation and CMAQ Projects (August 4, 1993),” Division of Transportation Programming


Local Assistance Program Guidelines, Chapter 4 “Surface Transportation Program”

Websites
www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/
www.dot.ca.gov/hq/transprog/cmaqstp.htm