



## Sonoma County's Measure M: The Challenges and Benefits of Taxing Yourself

By Seana L. S. Gause, Sonoma County Transportation Authority

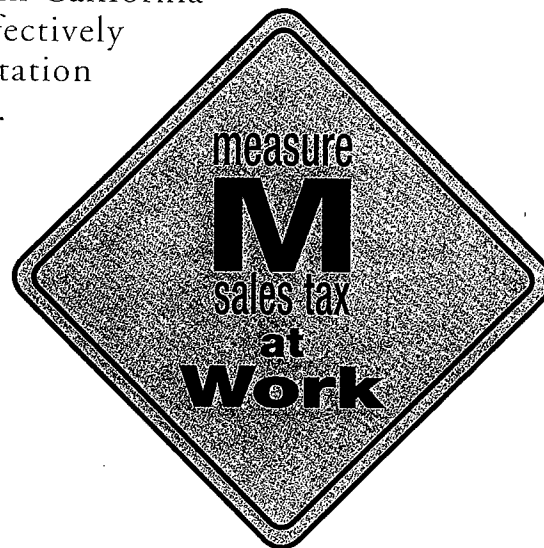
The passage of Measure M in November 2004 marked a major shift for transportation improvements in Sonoma County. By instituting a quarter-cent sales tax, Sonoma became the 18th self-help county in California — a county that can now more effectively leverage state and federal transportation dollars by providing a local match.

Reaching this point wasn't easy. Measure M was the fourth attempt by the county to pass a local sales tax for transportation purposes. This article is not a how-to piece on passage of a sales tax for transportation, but it hopefully will provide useful encouragement and information to other counties who, with perseverance and a little luck, can also become "self-help" counties.

Sonoma County's first proposed sales tax measure was placed on the ballot in 1990 as a half-cent sales tax with funding for various types of projects including rail and Highway 101 improvements. This initial attempt received 48 percent approval at a time when a simple majority was the requirement for passage.

The second attempt was in 1998 when a half-cent general sales tax measure was placed on the ballot along with an advisory measure about how new revenues should be spent on transportation projects that included rail, highways, roads and bikes. This A+B method garnered 72 percent support for the list of projects, but only 48.5 percent for the half-cent sales tax.

The third time a measure appeared on the ballot was in 2000 when the private sector spearheaded an initiative to place a half-cent tax for Highway 101 on the ballot. This spurred the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to place a



quarter-cent companion measure for transit, local roads and bicycles on the ballot. The highway measure received 58 percent support and the transit measure 59 percent, but both needed a two-thirds vote to be successful.

In 2004, the SCTA board of directors decided to take a different approach. The need for transportation improvements had continued to increase and state and federal commitments had waned. In response, the SCTA created a bare-bones expenditure plan that could be accomplished with a quarter-cent sales tax increase. The decision to limit the sales tax to a quarter-cent was important because the SMART rail program anticipates going to voters with a com-

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**User Week  
Starts  
November 5,  
2007**

**See page 6  
for details**

# Big Win for Local Streets and Roads in State Budget

By Theresa Romell, MTC

The 2008 California state budget contains both direct and indirect implications for local street and road (LS&R) funding in the current fiscal year, as well as future years. This is the first year in which funding will be distributed for several of the Proposition 1B Infrastructure Bond programs. It is also the first year in which, thanks to the passage of Proposition 1A, Proposition 42 funding is a protected source of revenue for transportation. In addition, the dramatic increase in the price of fuel has so greatly increased the projected balances for specific transit funding accounts that they have become a prime target for diversion by the state as a means of reducing the General Fund's deficit, which could have a ripple effect for streets and roads projects in the future.



based 75 percent on the relative share of vehicle registrations and 25 percent on road mileage. All jurisdictions are guaranteed to receive a minimum allocation of \$400,000 in FY 2008.

A more detailed estimate of Bay Area jurisdictions' FY 2008 Proposition 1B funding for LS&R improvement can be found at [www.mtc.ca.gov/legislation/state\\_budget.htm](http://www.mtc.ca.gov/legislation/state_budget.htm).

## Proposition 42 / Spillover

Although there is no Proposition 42 funding included this fiscal year in the budget for local streets and roads, discussions surrounding this important revenue source could impact what jurisdictions can expect to receive in years to come.

There was much discussion ahead of the final budget enactment over the idea of folding spillover revenue — revenue that is generated when growth in fuel prices outpaces the growth of all other taxable items — into Proposition 42 since both are related to the 5 percent statewide sales tax on gasoline. While spillover revenue was originally intended as a funding source for the Public Transportation Account (PTA), it is not constitutionally protected and more often than not is diverted by the state to cover state expenditures other than public transit.

In theory, folding the spillover into Proposition 42 would provide it with the same protection now covering Proposition 42 funds under Proposition 1A. This plan would require a willingness on the part of city and county jurisdictions and the state's transit operators to agree on a distribution method that could be mutually beneficial to all par-

*(continued on page 3)*

## Proposition 1B Infrastructure Bond

The state budget included some welcome relief for local maintenance programs by way of Proposition 1B funding. In fiscal

year (FY) 2008, almost half of the \$2 billion that was included in the bond program for LS&R improvement will be made available in the current fiscal year. Of the \$1 billion that is to be directed

towards cities over a ten-year period, \$550 million will be allocated this year. Of the \$1 billion to be directed towards counties, \$400 million will be allocated this year.

The table at left contains the estimated payments that will be received by each of the counties and their jurisdictions in FY 2008. City allocations are based on the jurisdiction's relative population share within the state, and the county allocations are

I-BOND LOCAL STREET & ROAD  
BAY AREA DISTRIBUTION (FY 2008)

TOTAL BAY AREA FUNDS BY COUNTY	FY2007-08
Alameda	35,397,899
Contra Costa	24,433,578
Marin	8,340,709
Napa	4,845,072
San Francisco	18,877,106
San Mateo	20,037,613
Santa Clara	43,465,320
Solano	11,440,268
Sonoma	13,340,342
Bay Area Subtotal	180,177,907
State Total	950,000,000

## State Budget

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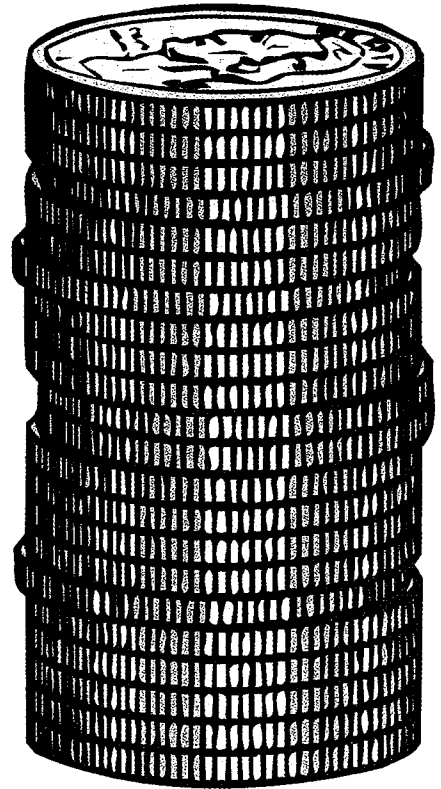
ties. Since no agreement was reached on the distribution, there was not enough political will to legislate a remedy for spillover funding this year. However, the topic may be worth pursuing in future years, especially given that high gasoline prices will likely result in a sizeable spillover for the foreseeable future.

Concurrently with the FY 2007-08 state budget, new legislation was passed that alters the original formula for distributing spillover funding. Instead of the entire amount flowing into the PTA, where it would be split evenly between the State Transit Assistance (STA) program and transit capital needs, 50 percent of spillover revenue generated will now go to cover state general fund costs and the remaining revenue will flow to the PTA, where it will be split two-thirds for the STA program and one-third for transit capital purposes.

## STIP

While street and road funding is not directly impacted by the Governor's decision to divert \$1.3 billion in spillover and existing transit funding away from the Public Transit Account in order to offset general fund costs, the implications of this action may include greater competition for capital project funding in the future.

According to the Draft 2008 STIP Fund Estimate (released by the California Transportation Commission in September) the 2008 STIP will add \$1.5 billion in net new capacity through fiscal year 2013. However, existing commitments through FY 2011 are greater than expected revenue, resulting in significant shortfalls for FY 2008–2010. The CTC plans to utilize short-term borrowing from other state accounts, coupled with some re-spreading of projects within the six-year fund estimate period, to cope with these shortfalls.



## Regional News

by Sri Srinivasan, MTC

### Update on P-TAP Round 9

The Pavement Management Technical Assistance Program (P-TAP) is entering its ninth year. Since the program's 1999 inception, MTC has programmed over \$4.6 million in regional Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds in eight previous P-TAP rounds. In total, MTC has funded 296 projects and assisted 108 Bay Area jurisdictions with their pavement needs.

MTC issued the call for P-TAP 9 applications in May 2007, with three significant changes incorporated into this round. The project sponsor is now required to provide a local non-federal contribution of 20 percent of the grant project amount instead of the 11.47 per-

cent match required in the previous round. A minimum grant amount of \$7,500 was established, with a cap of \$40,000 maximum per jurisdiction. Previous rounds had a cap of \$25,000 per jurisdiction, and no minimum. Since almost all local jurisdictions in the MTC region use StreetSaver as their pavement management system, a two or three-year subscription to the online version of StreetSaver is included in the award for grant recipients.

MTC received a total of 69 applications from Bay Area agencies and one from the County of Mariposa. The 70 requests totaled roughly \$2 million while the amount available to expend was \$1 million. In late summer, 35 projects were chosen to receive funding for this round. A list of grant recipients can be seen at: [www.mtcpms.org/ptap/P-TAP\\_9\\_recipients.html](http://www.mtcpms.org/ptap/P-TAP_9_recipients.html)

Round 9 was kicked off with a big flourish with MTC receiving a 100 percent of the local contribution funding on time.

### Invitation for Articles for Street Talk

The Regional Streets and Roads Program invites our readers to submit articles for inclusion in future editions of this newsletter. Local officials are asked to write articles and share their knowledge on a variety of subjects – experiences with new pavement materials, innovative funding solutions, new training opportunities and strategies adopted to stretch the existing budget. Please send articles to Sri Srinivasan, MTC, at (510) 817-5793 or [ssrinivasan@mtc.ca.gov](mailto:ssrinivasan@mtc.ca.gov).

# STP/CMAQ Delivery Update: Keeping an Eye on Obligation Deadlines

By Ross McKeown, MTC

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA) expires in less than two years on September 30, 2009. This may seem like a long way off, but we need to work now to ensure Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Management and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funds will not be lost.

Two key issues — regional delivery policy deadlines and the SAFETEA rescission — make it critical that all STP/CMAQ funding programmed under SAFETEA be obligated by the end of SAFETEA, or earlier. The Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs), transit operators and project sponsors need to be aware of these issues to avoid loss of funding.

## Regional Funding Delivery Deadlines

The Regional Project Delivery Policy (MTC Resolution 3606) requires that committed funds be obligated by established deadlines. Policy dictates that funding be programmed in the federal Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in the year of apportionment and that these funds be obligated by May 31 of the apportionment (programmed) year. Although apportionments are available for four years under federal regulations, they are only available for

three years under state statute AB 1012. Furthermore, the Obligation Authority (OA) that is provided for the apportionment is only valid for the fiscal year in which the OA is made available. These federal, state and regional deadlines make it imperative that projects be delivered as programmed in the TIP.

Specifically, the regional project delivery policy requires that STP/CMAQ funds programmed in fiscal year (FY) 2008-09 be obligated by May 31, 2009 (with the obligation request due to Caltrans by March 1, 2009). Since FY 2008-09 is the last year of SAFETEA, no exceptions will be allowed, and any funds not obligated by the May 31, 2009 deadline will likely be lost.

## SAFETEA Rescission

Every year Congress rescinds a portion of unobligated apportionment provided to the states. In FY 2006-07 alone, \$6 million in CMAQ funding was rescinded from the MTC region, with a similar rescission expected for FY 2007-08. Within SAFETEA legislation is a provision to rescind unobligated apportionment at the end of SAFETEA totaling \$8.5 billion nationally. Ensuring timely obligations will minimize the region's loss due to these rescissions.

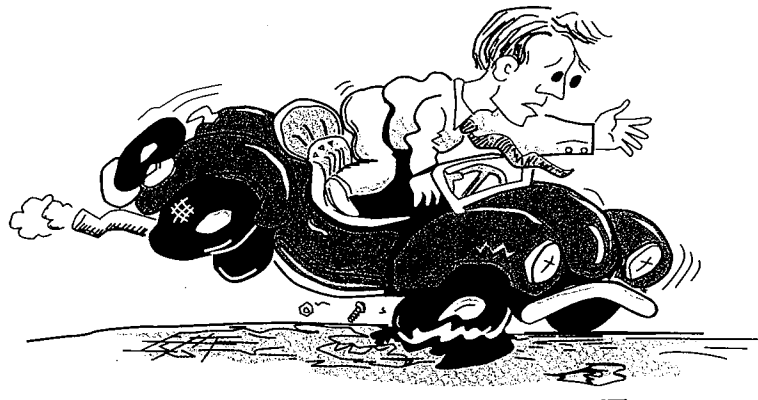
## Assistance Available

Sponsors may want to review project schedules to ensure the regional obligation deadlines for both FY 2007-08 and FY 2008-09 can be met, and perhaps consider advancing projects from FY 2008-09 into FY 2007-08 where possible, considering the uncertainties that lie ahead.

The following MTC staff-people are available should you need assistance.

**Craig Goldblatt** – STP/CMAQ Program Manager 510-817-5837, [cgoldblatt@mtc.ca.gov](mailto:cgoldblatt@mtc.ca.gov)

**Ross McKeown** – Programming and Funding Manager, 510-817-5842, [rmckeown@mtc.ca.gov](mailto:rmckeown@mtc.ca.gov)



# Software Updates & News

By Sui Tan, MTC

## XML is Everywhere

In our July 2007 issue, we covered some of the key changes in navigational tools for the new .NET version of StreetSaver®. In this issue we will cover another innovative addition to StreetSaver – eXtensible Markup Language (XML).

In simple terms, HTML was designed to display data and to focus on the layout of data and information on the Web, while XML was designed for data manipulation and transmission between different technologies. Computer systems and databases often contain data in incompatible formats. One of the most time-consuming challenges for developers has been to exchange

data between such systems over the Internet. Converting the data to XML greatly reduces this complexity and creates a standardized format for data that can be read by many different types of applications.

XML is widely used. Handheld devices like mobile phones have applications written in XML. Users will find that XML can be utilized in several areas of StreetSaver.NET's Utilities module. One such application is the ability to Import Inspection Units using the XML format. An XML schema file is provided and users can utilize this schema file to correctly format XML files. Third-party developers can implement the schema file in the development of data collection utilities for



automated distress collection systems or other data collection tools.

Differences between the current 8.0 version and the new .NET version of StreetSaver are described below. This list is a work in progress and will continue to be modified. We are on schedule for a fall 2008 release.

## MTC StreetSaver®

### Difference between Version 8.0 and Version .NET (in development) as of August, 2007

#### New Features

<b>New User Interface</b>	The user interface has been redesigned, including new icons and screen layout and design. A graphical main screen provides easy access to all areas of the program without the use of a traditional menu. The toolbar used for add/edit/delete in version 8.0 has been removed and replaced with a more intuitive click-and-edit design.
<b>Microsoft SQL Server 2005 Database</b>	The database has been migrated to SQL Server 2005.
<b>Improved Performance</b>	StreetSaver® now takes full advantage of the .NET SQL Client and provides vast improvements in data access times and overall system performance.
<b>Attached Documents</b>	Documents and Images added to existing system objects are now stored in a Repository on the StreetSaver® Online servers.
<b>Filter</b>	The filter feature has been upgraded and standardized throughout the system. The same filter screen is now used on all screens, custom reports, canned reports, graphs, scenarios and project selection.
<b>Import Inspection Units</b>	XML and Excel formats have been added for importing Inspection Units. The legacy text file format is still available for backwards compatibility with third party Inspection Collection tools.
<b>Export Sections Utility</b>	A new XML format has been added for exporting sections to third party systems. The legacy .dbf file format also has been maintained.
<b>Backup/Restore</b>	Online Users can now back up and restore their online database.
<b>Open Database</b>	Consultants can switch between customers from within the system, without logging out of the online system.
<b>GIS Shapefile Export</b>	Users can now export results of GIS Reports to shapefiles for inclusion in existing GIS systems.
<b>GIS Integration</b>	New GIS functionality has been integrated for seamless linking to pavement sections and assets.
<b>GIS Reporting</b>	GIS Reporting is now integrated with StreetSaver®. Selections can be filtered using the standard StreetSaver® filter, selecting an area on the map, or using any of the canned GIS filter criteria.

