

# Regional Priority Projects



2003 / 2004



# Introduction

SACOG's *Metropolitan Transportation Plan for 2025* includes hundreds of projects planned for the next 22 years. It is vital to establish what can be done within the next two years. This is particularly important in light of the recent State budget crisis, which has the potential to affect SACOG-sponsored projects. For example, the Governor's proposed suspension of the Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) could lead to the delay or elimination of projects such as the region's light rail extension and improvement projects. Based on current proposals, the Sacramento Region faces the loss of approximately \$139 million of previously programmed state TCRP funding for Light Rail extensions on the South Line, North East Line and Downtown Folsom extensions as well as funding for the Sacramento Emergency Clean Air and Transportation (SECAT) program, the Watt Avenue/U.S. 50 and Sheldon Road/Route 99 interchanges. Finding additional funds to fill these funding gaps will be a priority during the next few fiscal years.

As part of SACOG's mission to deliver transportation projects, a list of regional priority projects has been established and approved by the SACOG Board of Directors. The Board will encourage project sponsors and countywide transportation agencies to advance these projects for funding whenever possible. SACOG will also work to counter any threats to the funding for, or progress on, Priority Projects.

The projects that follow have been identified as those with the highest priority in the region (listed in alphabetical order).

## Air Quality Improvement

The Sacramento Region is currently designated as a “severe” ozone non-attainment area with an attainment date of 2005 for the federal one-hour ozone standard. The Sacramento region’s existing State Implementation Plan (SIP) was last adopted in 1994, and although the region’s air quality is improving, it continues to experience exceedences of the federal ozone standard. SACOG is working closely with all the air districts within our Federal ozone non-attainment area in the preparation of a new SIP. The goal is to have a new SIP submitted to the California Air Resources Board by August 2004, with approval by the Environmental Protection Agency by December 2004.

As part of the region’s overall effort to meet clean air standards and achieve transportation conformity, SACOG has partnered with the air districts to implement the Sacramento Emergency Clean Air and Transportation (SECAT) program. This program seeks to reduce nitrogen oxide (NOx) from the heavy-duty, on-road sector of the emission inventory by providing grant funds to public and private fleet operators and owner-operators to take actions to reduce their vehicle emissions. Heavy-duty vehicle owners have received grants to purchase new, lower-emission vehicles (such as natural gas transit buses and refuse trucks), to put newer diesel engines into older diesel trucks and to purchase newer trucks while scrapping older trucks. If surplus funds become available, additional strategies that will be pursued under this program include installing retrofit devices to reduce emissions and using lower-emission fuels.

## Bus Replacement Program

Although the first priority of the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan for 2025* is to expand transit, it is also essential to replace transit equipment when it has reached its useful life. For large transit buses this is about 12 years, less for paratransit vehicles. All of the region’s transit operators face significant bus replacement needs over the next several years.

## Capitol Corridor Intercity and Regional Rail Service

SACOG will support efforts to incrementally implement full hourly service between Sacramento and Oakland and to increase service to Placer County. As part of this effort, SACOG will assist the Capitol Corridor’s staff to obtain rolling stock needed for the hourly service. It will assist, as required, in keeping the Yolo Causeway double tracking project moving so that it can be completed by October 2003. It will also support completion of the environmental analysis and engineering for the Roseville third track and for construction as soon as possible. SACOG will continue to participate actively in planning for both new and renovated facilities at the Sacramento Intermodal Station and to work with all parties to program funds once the project is approved. SACOG will support efforts to implement regional rail service between Auburn and Dixon and in this vein will work to obtain needed track improvements that will benefit both commuter and intercity service. SACOG will also continue to follow closely the study to determine the feasibility of operating Capitol Corridor trains on the new Benicia-Martinez Bridge and, if appropriate, support the Capitol Corridor’s efforts to fund the project.

## Cosumnes River Boulevard Extension

This project will extend this major east-west roadway in south Sacramento from its current terminus at Franklin Boulevard to I-5, thus completing a major connector between I-5 and Route 99. In addition to relieving traffic on major east-west roads to the north (Meadowview Road) and the south (Laguna Boulevard), the project will provide needed access to developable land on both sides of I-5, in accordance with Sacramento’s General Plan.

## Downtown Sacramento Access Improvements

In order for downtown Sacramento to continue to be the economic center of the region, it is important that access be improved. The *Metropolitan Transportation Plan for 2025*



*As part of the region’s overall effort to meet clean air standards and achieve transportation conformity, SACOG has partnered with the air districts to implement the Sacramento Emergency Clean Air and Transportation (SECAT) program.*

*The MTP calls for expansion of the replacement program for transit equipment.*

*SACOG supports continued improvements to Capitol Corridor service, including eventual hourly service between Sacramento and Oakland.*



included a package of projects to improve access from the north. These include extensions of Sixth and Seventh Streets from Richards Boulevard to downtown, widening of Richards Boulevard and its interchange with I-5, construction of the new Gateway Boulevard, and improved access to the railyards from I-5 via an improved Jibboom Street. From the east, the MTP includes carpool lanes on U.S. 50; SACOG will continue working with the City of Sacramento, Caltrans, and others to determine the feasibility of extending these lanes from Sunrise Boulevard to downtown Sacramento. From the south, the Stockton Boulevard Bus Enhancements Study defined a set of innovative transit technology improvements and traffic engineering strategies that will improve the operations and quality of bus service.

studies of other HOV segments (from I-5 to Longview Drive and from the Placer County line to Route 65), which were called for in the investment strategy, and SACOG has included these projects in the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan for 2025*. Meanwhile, the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency is considering \$90 million worth of improvements from the Sacramento County line to State Route 65, the City of West Sacramento has begun work on the U.S. 50/Harbor Boulevard interchange, and the City of Rocklin is conducting preliminary work on the I-80/Sierra College Boulevard reconstruction. At the same time, the Sacramento Regional Transit District is conducting environmental studies of double tracking of light rail to accommodate express light rail service. SACOG will identify funding to expedite these projects.

*The MTP calls for a package of projects to improve downtown accessibility.*

*Light Rail Extension Studies are focusing on further extension to the south and a new Downtown/Natomas/Airport line.*

*The MTP shows \$3.1 billion available for pavement rehabilitation between 2003 and 2025.*

### **I-5 Riverfront Connection**

Pedestrian access from Sacramento's central business district to the Sacramento River and beyond is restricted by I-5 and riverfront parcels are isolated. Several alternatives have been developed, including decking the sub-grade freeway south of the Tower Bridge. Comprehensive environmental and engineering analyses are underway, to be completed in 2005.

### **I-5/Route 113 Connector**

This three-phase project will construct connectors from I-5 to Route 113 within and near Woodland. The first phase includes improvements at the adjacent County Road 102 interchange as well as engineering and right-of-way for the freeway-to-freeway connectors. Additional funding will be pursued to complete the financial package for phase two.

### **I-80 Corridor Plan Implementation**


The I-80 Corridor Plan articulates an investment strategy for the I-80 corridor between Davis and Colfax. Construction of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes between Longview Drive and the Placer County line began in 2002. Caltrans is conducting further

### **Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Planning and Deployment**

Late in 2003, SACOG and its partners will begin work on a Strategic Deployment Plan that will set priorities for ITS projects over the next twenty years and help SACOG integrate these projects into its plan and program. Phase one of the Arden Way Smart Corridor will be completed in late 2003; this will improve traffic flow and expedite buses and emergency vehicles. A detailed engineering study will also be conducted as part of a greater project to install the needed hardware, including fiber-optic cable, database servers, and software to complete STARNET (Sacramento Transportation Area Network) which will link several traffic operations centers. Federal funding earmarks are being sought for STARNET and the second phase of the Arden Way project.

### **Light Rail Extension Studies**

Sacramento Regional Transit District's Multi-Corridor Study resulted in a focus on further extension to the south and a new Downtown/Natomas/Airport (DNA) line. State funds were earmarked for the further extension of the south line and SACOG has approved federal funding for an Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental



Impact Statement (AA/DEIS) for the DNA line. Work on the Final EIS for the South Line extension and the AA/DEIS for the DNA line has begun. The DNA studies are scheduled to be completed in June 2003 and the South Line analysis is scheduled to be completed in October 2003.

### Multi-Modal Corridor Studies

The *Metropolitan Transportation Plan for 2025* includes three multi-modal corridors that will connect suburban locations around the central core of the region. The Placer Parkway, which is the furthest along in its planning, is listed separately. The other two corridors are the Elk Grove-Rancho Cordova-El Dorado Connector, and the Rancho Cordova-South Placer Connector. For each of these corridors, the following activities are planned for this year:

- a public involvement plan and formation of advisory committees,
- a report on current baseline land use and transportation conditions,
- forecasts of travel demand, and
- a concept plan that explains how roadways, transit services, sidewalks and trails, open space, and other adjacent land uses can be developed in an orderly and integrated manner over 10 to 20 years to provide a clearly defined, high quality transportation corridor.

The concept plan will be followed by initial environmental studies and preliminary engineering.

### Pavement Rehabilitation

Road maintenance needs in the region are currently estimated at about \$84 million annually for local agencies. In addition, the backlog of maintenance needs is approximately \$780 million. SACOG's *Metropolitan Transportation Plan for 2025* shows \$3.1 billion available for pavement rehabilitation between 2003 and 2025. This amount is sufficient to meet 80 percent of the region's pavement rehabilitation needs of \$3.8 billion for the period. SACOG and local jurisdictions must work together to find reliable long-term funding sources to ensure that pave-

ment rehabilitation continues to be performed on an ongoing basis and to reduce the maintenance backlog. As part of the effort to retain Beale Air Force Base, it will be necessary to upgrade access roads to two-lane standards.

### Placer Parkway

The Placer Parkway is a proposed new transportation facility connecting Routes 99 and 65. Currently, it is in the first tier environmental stage. SACOG is monitoring this process and will support future requests for funding the other phases of this project.

### Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

Through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, SACOG will continue to provide a forum for regional cooperation on bicycle and pedestrian projects. Of particular emphasis this year is development of the Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Master Plan to provide guidance on priorities for non-motorized transportation projects.

### Regional Funding Programs

The recently adopted *Metropolitan Transportation Plan for 2025* included federal funds for four regional programs (Community Design Incentives, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Transportation Demand Management, and Air Quality) to be administered by SACOG. The Community Design Incentive Program will provide grants for land development projects that implement "smart growth" principles. The other three programs are intended to fund effective, regionally significant transportation and related air quality strategies. This year, SACOG advisory committees will be making recommendations to the Board on selection criteria and processes for awarding these funds to local agency applicants and staff will administer the first-round application process. After evaluation and approval, it is expected that the first round of grants will be awarded in fall, 2003.

### Smart Growth Community Design Principles Include:

- Transportation Choices
- Compact Development
- Mixed Use Developments
- Use of Existing Assets
- Housing Diversity
- Quality Building & Site Design
- Environmental Conservation



### **Priority Projects include *all* of these attributes:**

- The projects affect or include more than one jurisdiction.
- The projects are true regional priorities that will affect the entire region.
- The SACOG Board, staff, or member jurisdiction has some influence or control.
- Some element of the project can be accomplished within the next year.
- There is some potential benefit to making the project a priority.
- There is a realistic expectation that funding will be available.
- There is support from the jurisdictions where the project is located and support from the lead agency.

### **Regional Transit Enhancement Programs**

Through a coordinated regional application, transit operators in the SACOG region have received grants under the Federal Transit Administration's Jobs Access/Reverse Commute Program for the last four years. A range of transit service enhancements has now been implemented throughout the region to improve the ability of entry-level workers to get to work. A number of service concepts have been successfully tested and additional needs have been identified. Funding to continue and expand these services is needed; earmarks will be sought and grant applications prepared.

SACOG will also begin work on two community-based transit programs in 2003 that aim to improve transit ridership and raise transit visibility. SACOG will work with area transit operators and the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance to engage low-income and minority community groups in a planning process to develop two neighborhood-level transit plans. This process will identify gaps and deficiencies in the existing transit network, evaluate service alternatives, and select a set of recommended system improvements to improve mobility opportunities and access. Additional funding is being sought to expand the program into additional communities. SACOG is also advancing a transit marketing program designed to provide useful technical analysis and marketing products for area transit operators. A non-profit, Odyssey, will lead a community-based planning process to develop outreach and marketing programs designed to increase ridership along specific transit routes.

### **Right-of-Way Preservation Study**

SACOG is leading the second phase of the CalTraction Preservation and Purchase Plan Study. This phase includes negotiations for the purchase of the segment of this right-of-way between Elder Creek Road in Sacramento County and Woodbridge Road in Lodi. Pending successful negotiations, it will include other tasks leading to close of escrow.

### **Route 65: Lincoln Bypass**

SACOG supported the significant funding this project received from the 2002 State Transportation Improvement Program. While the project is considered fully funded, cost escalations, right-of-way issues, local access considerations, and unforeseen circumstances are already creating need for additional dollars.

### **Route 70/99 Corridor Improvements**

Portions of Route 99 south of Yuba City are scheduled to be widened to four lanes of conventional highway and portions of Route 70 south of Marysville are scheduled to be widened to four-lane expressway standards. SACOG will push for timely delivery of these projects and for the additional funds needed to complete the unprogrammed segments of Route 99, including the Interchange at Riego Road. SACOG will work with Sutter County, Yuba County, and others to prepare a habitat conservation plan, which is needed to ensure mitigation of impacts and timely project delivery.

### **Sacramento Regional GIS Cooperative's Street Network Database**

The Sacramento Regional GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Cooperative Project has developed a plan to integrate building and street information into a new street network database system. Seed money that was invested over the last two years will deploy a simplified version of this new database for Sacramento County in 2003. The database has enormous potential to coordinate local planning efforts and improve local public safety response times. SACOG will lead the Regional GIS Cooperative's efforts to look for funds to build this database over the next two years. The database will have room to house local addresses, street characteristics, and capital improvement project information used in SACOG's local monitoring and reporting programs.

## Sacramento Region Blueprint: Transportation/Land Use Study

The Blueprint Project is a comprehensive examination of the relationship between land use patterns and transportation behavior in the six-county region. The project has created a Base Case Future Scenario to analyze these issues over fifty years under a “business-as-usual” growth pattern. Several alternative regional scenarios will be created over the next 18 months. The focus of the project for 2003 will be on interactive community planning workshops in each of SACOG’s member local governments. The workshops, which will feature state-of-the-art interactive computer software (PLACE’S), will begin at the neighborhood scale through the spring, focus on the countywide scale in the summer, and return to the full regional scale in the fall and winter. The project is also upgrading the information, analytical and modeling capability of the organization through a number of projects, including developing data on differences in land development economics throughout the region. SACOG’s travel modeling capabilities are also being upgraded to better estimate the impacts that changes in land use density, diversity, design and location have on travel patterns. The Board will use the results of the study in its next update to the MTP in 2005.

## Sacramento Regional Transit District Bus Maintenance Facility Expansion

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for 2025 calls for a significant expansion of the Regional Transit bus fleet as part of its comprehensive strategy to reduce congestion and improve air quality. In order to expand its bus fleet, RT will have to develop a second bus maintenance facility. RT conducted a feasibility study and an environmental impact study to evaluate and analyze potential sites for the construction of this facility. In December 2002, the RT Board approved the Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility and designated a site on Main Avenue and Raley Boulevard. RT will develop a phasing plan and financing strategy

for facility design and engineering, real estate acquisition, and construction of the proposed facility. The new facility will allow RT to maintain an expanded fleet and be capable of maintaining RT’s standard coaches, articulated buses, and the small buses used in the new Neighborhood Ride community bus services.

## Sheldon Road/Route 99 Interchange

The current interchange design is substandard in several respects. Accordingly, traffic that would normally use this interchange diverts to the Calvine Road interchange in Sacramento and the Bond Road/Laguna Boulevard interchange in Elk Grove. Design work is scheduled to begin this year. The right-of-way is funded, but additional funds are needed for construction.

## U.S. 50 Corridor

Implementation of the investment strategy for the U.S. 50 Corridor continues. The construction of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes between Sunrise Boulevard and El Dorado Hills Boulevard, including the reconstruction of the Sunrise Boulevard interchange, has recently been completed. Over the course of the next three years, SACOG will continue to work with the City and County of Sacramento, the City of Folsom, the El Dorado County Transportation Commission, Sacramento Regional Transit, Caltrans and others on approximately 30 projects to ultimately reduce traffic congestion along the Corridor. Some of the projects include the extension of HOV lanes from El Dorado Hills Boulevard to Shingle Springs, determining the feasibility of extending the HOV lanes into downtown Sacramento, extending light rail to downtown Folsom, widening Folsom Boulevard between Sunrise Boulevard and Hazel Avenue, road extensions and widenings to relieve the Folsom Boulevard/Power Inn Road intersection, Camino Freeway Conversion and constructing the Empire Ranch and Western Placerville interchanges.



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