

# Memorandum

**To:** Chairman and Commissioners

**Date:** June 6, 2000

**From:** Robert I. Remen

**File No:** K52.1  
BOOK ITEM 4.5  
ACTION

**Ref:** Adoption of First Round of Statewide Transportation Enhancements (STE) Program

**Issue:** What projects should the Commission program for the first round of the Statewide Transportation Enhancements (STE) program?

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends programming 18 projects out of 20 presented, all 8 in the South and the top 10 (out of 12) in the North, for a total of \$12,561,000, yielding a first round of balanced programming 60% South/40% North, for the reasons discussed below.

**Background:** The STE program forms one of the three parts of the State's 25% share of the federal Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA) program. The STE program covers projects of a greater-than-regional scale or interest, sponsored by federal or state agencies (other than Caltrans) or other agencies with a state agency partner. Caltrans reviews all project applications for program eligibility, the Resources Agency prioritizes the eligible projects via a committee-of-experts review and ranking as specified in the program guidelines and recommends which ones should be funded, and the Commission adopts projects and funding amounts into the program. The STE program guidelines, which the Commission adopted in December 1999, require projects to be programmed according to the South/North split: 60% in 13 South counties and 40% in 45 North counties.

The Commission in December 1999 made available up to \$15 million for a first round of programming, with applications due March 1, 2000. The Resources Agency received 23 project applications for the first round, and Caltrans found 20 projects for \$13,160,000 to be eligible. The Resources Agency sent the Commission a priority list, split South and North as required in the program guidelines, recommending that all 20 projects be funded in full. The Commission presented that priority list for public review at the May meeting, has received several letters supporting various projects during the past month, and is scheduled to adopt the first round at the June meeting.

**Discussion:** Since all 20 projects are recommended for full funding, the first round has de facto become no longer a competitive round. Accordingly, the Commission questioned whether it should program all projects just because they were there, or cut the list off at some point with the projects at the lower end held back to compete in the second round as a test of comparative worthiness against future competitors.

Staff has tried to examine "comparative worthiness" among these projects, a somewhat subjective undertaking, notwithstanding that the relative worthiness of future projects cannot be known now. Without trying to second-guess the Resources Agency's priority setting, Commission staff examined the estimated number of beneficiaries ("users") each of the 20 projects would serve, and looked at the

relative cost per beneficiary per year. There are four different types of projects in the field: 12 bicycle or pedestrian trails/sidewalks/bridges, 5 scenic acquisitions, 2 bicycle education programs, and one museum collection. The beneficiaries and benefits clearly vary by type of project. Staff reports the following conclusions, some of which are fairly obvious:

1. In looking at per-user costs, most of the projects fall in a cost range of \$1-\$3 per annual user; in comparison, a \$5 million mile of urban freeway lane serving 15,000 vehicles per day would cost about \$1 per annual user.
2. Generally, projects lower on the priority list are not substantially more costly per user than those near the top, with no discernible pattern of variation.
3. Scenic acquisitions, typically located alongside a state highway, have a large number of viewers/users (equal to the number of vehicles passing in a year), which typically brings the cost below \$1/view.
4. Most of the bicycle projects in this field connect up several discontinuous bike routes or add onto existing route networks, with the sponsors estimating use based on current use on adjacent segments but actually expecting significantly higher use because the connections open up new travel routes and opportunities that previously could not be traveled.
5. Of the four projects with relatively high per-user costs, three extend bike routes in rural areas with low daily use numbers but high recreation use potential, and the other buys a large desert ranch property that forms a bridge connecting two adjacent state parks, protecting significant wildlife corridor benefits in addition to scenic views from the highway.
6. In looking at unit costs, the numbers show the obvious: coastal land or land near towns (with development pressure) is more expensive than remote rural land, urban bike paths and sidewalks are more expensive than rural ones, and bike bridges yield higher unit costs than on-ground bike paths.

The data staff used in examining these projects are displayed on an attached chart. **Staff's bottom line conclusion would say that, except possibly for the North Yuba Trail project, projects lower on this priority list do not appear to be an order of magnitude less worthwhile than those higher, presenting no obvious risk of programming projects now that would preclude much-higher-value ones in the future.**

**Options and Recommendation:** Staff considered three options for this first round of the STE program:

1. Program all 20 projects as recommended, which would leave the South underprogrammed by just over \$1,000,000, and require a compensating overprogramming in the South in the second round, due in Fall 2001.
2. Program all but the two lowest projects in the North (Navarro Point and North Yuba Trail), which would yield 60% South/40% North balance for this first round, and require a balanced second round too.
3. Program to a point on the list where inherent per-user project value fell off by perhaps an order of magnitude, and hold the remaining projects to re-compete in the second round. Staff could find no such point.

Staff recommends option #2, largely to favor balanced programming but partly because the value of the North Yuba Trail project (one of the two left unprogrammed) may be too low to warrant programming it uncompetitively at this time.



## Comparison of Annual Users and Project Costs for STE (TEA) Projects

<u>Project</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>TEA \$</u>	<u>Total cost</u>	<u>Annual Users</u>	<u>TEA \$/User/Yr</u>	<u>TEA \$/Unit</u>
<b>South</b>						
Ojai scenic easement	75 acres	\$650,000	\$1,240,000	6,850,000	\$0.09	\$8700/ac.
San Dieguito Lagoon, Coast to Crest trail	2.7 miles	\$1,361,000	\$1,538,000	140,000	\$9.72	\$500,000/mi.
Goleta, Route 101 bike bridge	0.5 mile	\$500,000	\$2,770,000	160,000	\$3.13	\$1,000,000/mi.
L.A. Music Center, Grand Ave sidewalks	0.3 mile	\$2,000,000	\$3,937,000	8,200,000	\$0.24	\$6,670,000/mi.
Anza-Borrego Park, Lucky Five property	840 acres	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000	60,000	\$16.67	\$1200/ac.
San Pascual Valley, Sta. Maria bike bridge	0.1 mile	\$174,000	\$197,000	75,000	\$2.32	\$1,740,000/mi.
Bodie Gateway property	155 acres	\$800,000	\$909,000	980,000	\$0.82	\$5200/ac.
Livable Communities bike education project	brochures/events	<u>\$992,000</u>	<u>\$1,159,000</u>	315,000	\$3.15	n.a.
<b>South Total</b>		<b>\$7,477,000</b>	<b>\$13,750,000</b>			
<b>North</b>						
UCDavis, bicycle collection for museum	60 pieces	\$440,000	\$60,000	no estimate		n.a.
UCDavis, bike lanes and streetscape	2.7 miles	\$1,253,000	\$1,424,000	440,000	\$2.85	\$460,000/mi.
Sausalito, Bay Trail, Bridgeway North	1.3 miles	\$447,000	\$508,000	325,000	\$1.38	\$340,000/mi.
Vallejo, Bay Trail, Carquinez connection	1.0 mile	\$100,000	\$112,000	75,000	\$1.33	\$100,000/mi.
Folsom, bike trails and bridge	2.5 miles	\$598,000	\$830,000	400,000	\$1.50	\$240,000/mi.
Redwood NP, Berry Glen-Lost Man bike trail	1.0 mile	\$400,000	\$448,000	150,000	\$2.67	\$400,000/mi.
Oakland, Bay Trail, Mandela Parkway	0.8 mile	\$902,000	\$2,100,000	350,000	\$2.58	\$1,120,000/mi.
Echo Summit, Pony Express Trail extension	5.5 miles	\$220,000	\$405,000	12,000	\$18.33	\$40,000/mi.
Livable Communities bike education project	brochures/events	\$424,000	\$497,000	135,000	\$3.14	n.a.
Westport Headlands property	7 acres	<u>\$300,000</u>	<u>\$625,000</u>	<u>675,000</u>	<u>\$0.44</u>	<u>\$45,000/ac.</u>
Navarro Point property	55 acres	\$400,000	\$1,115,000	1,225,000	\$0.33	\$7500/ac.
Downieville, North Yuba Trail and rest stop	3.5 miles	<u>\$199,000</u>	<u>\$478,000</u>	8,000	\$24.88	\$55,000/mi.
<b>North Total</b>		<b>\$5,683,000</b>	<b>\$8,602,000</b>			
<b>Statewide Total</b>		<b>\$13,160,000</b>	<b>\$22,352,000</b>			