REPORT

DATE: August 5, 2004

TO: Transportation & Communications Committee
Regional Council

FROM: Rich Macias, Manager, Transportation Planning and Programming
Sylvia Patsaouras, Manager, Environmental Planning

RE: 2004 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (2004 RTIP)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Provide additional time to conduct inter-agency consultation for further analyses of funding and timely implementation issues as well as to pursue regional strategies for overcoming these obstacles. Further, staff would need this time to appropriately respond to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) concerns about financial constraint and project completion schedules.

Bring the RTIP approval action back for consideration at the September Regional Council meeting.

Have the President send a letter to the state and federal agencies urging them to conduct concurrent reviews for their respective approvals to meet the October 4, 2004 deadline.

Additionally, request that the Chairpersons and the Chief Executive Officers of SCAG and the County Transportation Commissions/Authorities meet and discuss critical conformity/TIP issues.

SUMMARY:

Since the June 18, 2004 release of the Draft 2004 RTIP, SCAG staff has worked with the staff of the transportation commissions to verify that every effort is being made to ensure the timely completion of Transportation Control Measure (TCM) projects. As part of this effort, a consultant was hired to reassess 120 TCM projects that were initially identified by staff as being questionable. The listing was narrowed down to nine projects with potential implementation issues.

Additionally, the FHWA has submitted comments expressing concerns about funding and implementation. In order to address these concerns, staff will continue to work with the transportation commissions—resolving any obstacles including funding and constructability issues that could potentially delay TCM project implementation and in turn, jeopardize the region's conformity status.

BACKGROUND:

In conducting timely implementation analyses, staff initially identified 120 projects with potential delay issues. To date, staff has been able to narrow the listing to nine projects based upon further information and analyses. These nine projects require additional funds or actions for accelerated procurement in order to meet final implementation schedules.

#	County	Project Description
1	Los Angeles	San Fernando Valley North-South BRT
2	Los Angeles	Wilshire Blvd Rapid Transitway (Mid-City)
3	Los Angeles	Crenshaw Transit Corridor (note: non-TCM)
4	Los Angeles	I-5 HOV lanes from SR-134 to SR-170
5	Los Angeles	I-5 HOV lanes from SR-170 to SR-118
6	Los Angeles	I-5 HOV lanes from SR-118 to SR-14
7	Los Angeles	SR-60 HOV lanes from I-605 to Brea Canyon Rd
8	Orange	Centerline, John Wayne Airport to Santa Ana
9	Riverside	SR-91 HOV lanes through downtown Riverside (note: non-TCM)

Based upon the evaluation of these nine projects, staff estimated a total need of $559 million to meet implementation schedules. This is a rather conservative estimate derived by evaluating level of funds currently programmed in the 2004 RTIP against total funding needs assumed for project completion in the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

It is critical to note that this funding shortfall results even after assuming transportation dollars are made available with an adopted state budget and a finalized federal surface transportation act. That is, the 2004 RTIP accounts for the region's share of transportation dollars expected as a result of the tribal gaming compacts, past state budget borrowings, moderate increases in federal surface transportation funding, as well as corrective measures to address the ethanol problem. Additionally, the 2004 RTIP assumes nearly $1 billion in anticipated federal discretionary new starts funding for Los Angeles and Orange Counties to complete priority transit projects. Even with these assumptions, there still remains a funding shortfall of $559 million just to meet implementation schedules for the nine projects identified above.

In light of the region's fiscal challenges and implementation issues, SCAG staff is committed to working with the county transportation commissions to clearly identify all potential solutions for resolving obstacles. Accordingly, SCAG in cooperation with the county transportation commissions will proactively seek transportation dollars that would ensure the timely implementation of critical projects. Staff proposes further consideration of the following strategies to address implementation obstacles:

- Re-evaluate the State's North/South allocation of funds—ensuring the region's fair share of transportation dollars, particularly for projects critical to meeting conformity requirements.

- Coalesce the region to seek transportation dollars through the federal appropriations process—obtaining federal discretionary dollars for critical transportation projects.

- Support design/build arrangements and/or emergency procurement procedures as appropriate—facilitating the implementation of innovative arrangements to accelerate project delivery.

- Reprioritize the funding of projects as may be necessary—working with appropriate transportation partners to identify non-TCM projects that are being delayed and shifting any programmed funds for such projects to critical TCM projects.

- Work with appropriate transportation partners to consider substitution of projects as may be necessary.

- Assess the possibility of transportation fund loan arrangements between counties to ensure the timely implementation of critical TCM projects.

- Focus on local ballot initiatives to fund transportation projects including the imposition of ½ cent sales tax measures as may be necessary.

FISCAL IMPACT:
The staff resources for developing the 2004 RTIP are contained within the Fiscal Years 2003/04 and 2004/05 SCAG budgets.