



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program Clears Hurdle

Alameda County – California. On August 31, 2011, the Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program cleared a final hurdle to begin an expanded countywide program in alignment with the beginning of the school year. The Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) has a long-standing commitment to the Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) Program, supporting an aggressive program since 2007, which has now reached almost 150 schools around the county. The expanded program will include high schools, infrastructure improvements that improve safety at schools, and a program that targets educating school staff and parents to use alternative modes of transportation. The creation of the Alameda CTC in July 2010, through a merger of two countywide transportation agencies, has expedited delivery of programs such as the Alameda County SR2S Program in Alameda County.

Twenty-five percent of morning congestion in Alameda County is related to getting children to school. The Alameda CTC has focused its SR2S program on educating and encouraging children to walk and bike to school through walking school buses, bicycle education and safety training, and parent and student coordinated education efforts. As a result of the program, an overall mode shift of 10% away from cars, including walking, biking and carpooling increases has been achieved, affirming effectiveness of the SR2S program. The success of the original four-year program stems from a rigorous, goal-oriented team effort by Alameda CTC staff, its Commissioners, and the team who helped to implement the program, TransForm, as well as committed parents, teachers and elected officials throughout the County.

The expanded SR2S program is made possible by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) creation of a regional Climate Initiatives Program, out of which federal funding for SR2S has been made available to all Bay Area Counties. In July 2010, Alameda CTC submitted a program to MTC that focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions by promoting walking, biking, transit, and carpooling to school. The program was developed through a collaborative community process initiated in February 2010, culminating in the program submittal to MTC. MTC approved \$3.2 million in federal funds for Alameda CTC to implement the expanded Alameda County SR2S program. This funding is being matched with \$420,000 in Measure B transportation sales tax funds, bringing the total program budget to \$3.64 million.

Through a competitive bidding process, Alameda CTC selected a consultant team comprised of a local business firm (Alta Planning & Design) and several subconsultants, including TransForm, in late June 2011. Because the funding for the consultant contract is substantially federal funds, the federal and state governments require that the consultant contract be subjected to a financial audit, by the state, to protect the financial interest of the public. This process can be time consuming, and only upon completion of this audit, can the work begin and uses of federal funds occur.

In July 2010, the Alameda CTC was formally created from the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA), which was responsible for administering state and federal funds at the county-level, and the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA), which was responsible for implementing the County's transportation sales tax measure. By combining the two agencies, coordination and collaboration on the SR2S program development and the use federal and local matching funds was streamlined. In addition, the state audit review process was expedited by the effective coordination between the Alameda CTC and the state.

The Alameda CTC has seen on-going efficiencies as a result of the merger. For example, the Commission's first consolidated budget for the FY 2011-2012 reflects consolidation efficiencies that will save taxpayers over \$3 million. In a time of diminishing revenues, the Alameda CTC is streamlining operations and eliminating redundancies. Alameda CTC Chair, Mark Green, Mayor of City of Union City, notes, "The merger of two countywide transportation agencies in Alameda County is saving taxpayers over \$3 million while providing uninterrupted services through improved strategic planning, effective funding decisions and on-going project and program implementation. These savings go directly into transportation projects and operations, supporting jobs and mobility. The public expects and deserves these efficiencies and the Alameda CTC is delivering them." The streamlined review of the SR2S program through the state auditing process is an example of how Alameda CTC continues to effectively deliver transportation solutions in Alameda County.

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[Alameda CTC](http://www.alamedactc.org) administers Measure B, the half-cent transportation sales tax in Alameda County, which was approved by 81.5 percent of the voters, as well as state and federally funded transportation improvements. Its mission is to plan, fund and deliver transportation programs and projects that expand access and improve mobility to foster a vibrant and livable Alameda County. For more information visit: <http://www.alamedactc.org>.