

## **CHAPTER 5**

# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION**

### INTRODUCTION

Public involvement and interagency consultation during the development and implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan is essential to an effective planning process. This Chapter provides an overview of the processes SJCOG currently has in place to provide all interested parties the opportunity to learn about and provide input into our various planning and programming activities. In addition, this Chapter describes the specific outreach and consultative efforts SJCOG staff undertook to assess the transportation priorities of the citizens of San Joaquin County.

Outreach efforts for the 2011 RTP were made through focus group meetings, regional workshops, online surveys, and presentation to the SJCOG standing committees. The 2011 RTP was developed in close coordination with SJCOG's interagency consultation partners through the interagency consultation conference calls and workshops; with the local jurisdictions and transit operators; and state and federal partner agencies.

### 2007 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The purpose of SJCOG's Public Participation Plan (Plan) is to inform and involve citizens in SJCOG's various programs, projects, and work activities. Among those included in this outreach effort were lower income households, minorities, persons with disabilities, representatives from community and service organizations, tribal councils, and other public agencies. This element also assists in identifying and addressing environmental justice and social equity issues. Citizen participation objectives include involvement of interested citizens, stakeholders, and representatives of community organizations in agency work through timely workshops on topical issues, fully noticed public hearings, and ongoing broad citizen/organization involvement in the planning and decision processes.

The Public Participation Plan, last adopted by the SJCOG Board in 2007, was circulated for resource agency and citizen input. It reflects changes to public outreach efforts defined in SAFETEA-LU including:

- MPOs must develop and utilize a “participation plan” that provides reasonable opportunities for interested parties to comment on the metropolitan transportation plan and Federal Transportation Improvement Program;
- The participation plan must be developed “in consultation with all interested parties,” and the public must have input on the participation plan;
- The participation plan must be in place prior to MPO adoption of transportation plans and TIPs;
- MPOs must employ visualization techniques to the maximum extent practicable; and
- MPOs must make long range transportation plans and TIPs available for public review in electronic formats such as the worldwide web.

The 2007 Public Participation Plan was circulated for the required 45-day public review and comment period, which was subsequently extended to provide additional opportunity for public and agency comments in 2007. The 2007 Public Participation Plan was available to download off the SJCOG website and is currently available on the SJCOG website at <http://www.sjco.org/public-participation/default.htm>. In addition, the availability of the 2007 Public Participation Plan was publicly noticed in area newspapers and circulated for comment to FHWA, FTA, Caltrans, and a variety of diverse community organizations. SJCOG staff incorporated comments into the Plan and finalized it through SJCOG Board action at the May, 2007 meeting. The 2007 SJCOG Public Participation Plan includes additional documentation of outreach efforts to develop the Participation Plan, and is included in Appendix 5-1 of the 2011 RTP. SJCOG anticipates updating the 2007 Public Participation Plan beginning in the fall of 2010 with an anticipated completion in May, 2011.

## **Interagency Consultation**

In addition to providing the public with an opportunity to contribute to the development of the Public Participation Plan, Section 450.316(b) of the federal regulations implementing SAFETEA-LU provisions requires that the Plan be developed, to the extent practicable, in consultation with other agencies and officials responsible for activities that are affected by transportation.

The SJCOG Public Participation Plan was first developed in 1995 as the “Public Involvement Plan” to formalize strategies for involving the citizens of San Joaquin County in transportation planning decisions. In 2007, SJCOG updated and published the Public Participation Plan in response to an increased focus by the federal government to develop a more transparent planning process and increase opportunities for early and continuing involvement.

As a result, SJCOG’s efforts to develop, draft, provide opportunity for public comment, adopt, and submit State and federal documents have followed the process identified in the Public Participation Plan. local, state, and federal agencies have had the opportunity to observe, comment on, and critique the public involvement process SJCOG has

committed to in its Plan. The 2007 Public Participation Plan update in response to SAFETEA-LU is one of many opportunities for agencies to voice comment on the process being used to reach out to the public. SJCOG has a public information officer on staff whose primary responsibility is to seek input on the effectiveness of the SJCOG public participation process. Although the SJCOG Public Participation Plan is only required to be updated every four years, SJCOG believes public participation is an ever evolving task and to be efficient in reaching the target community continuous outreach on what methods work “best” to involve the public in the planning process is necessary.

For the 2007 Public Participation Plan, COG staff distributed a survey to solicit comments from resource agencies about their successes in soliciting public comments. The survey (included in Appendix 5-4) was an open-ended invitation for resource agencies to provide suggestions about how to improve public participation.

Suggestions included:

- Surveys
- Email outreach
- Attend community events to solicit comments
- Educating participants on the topics of discussion, principles, and concepts
- Focus groups to test assumptions and refine future events
- Regional maps and datasets
- Diverse community involvement (blue collar workers to college graduates)

To involve resource agencies early in the 2011 RTP development process, SJCOG again distributed a survey to solicit comments from resource agencies in the fall of 2009. The survey similar to the 2007 survey was an open invitation for resource agencies to participate in the 2011 RTP planning process. (included in Appendix 5-4)

## **Interagency Collaboration and Public Citizen Involvement**

### 2011 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

#### **Public Outreach**

SJCOG staff followed the formal process outlined in SJCOG’s Public Participation Plan, which included a 45-day public comment period and public hearing in June 2010. SJCOG staff also utilized several methods to reach out to the citizens of San Joaquin County that involved public workshops and two sets of surveys. From the beginning of the outreach effort, SJCOG staff recognized that there was already a clear mandate by the citizens of San Joaquin County for the future transportation system as was voiced in the renewal of Measure K by 78% of the votes on November 7, 2006. As a result SJCOG’s public outreach efforts focused on the incorporation of the draft congestion

management process into the RTP planning process, the draft tier I and II project listings; the draft goals objectives and performance measures; and the draft revenue expenditures.

### *Public Workshops*

Seven public workshops were advertized in January, 2010 in local English language and Spanish language newspapers, on the SJCOG website and various organization websites and in the SJCOG monthly online newsletter Horizons. Public workshops were held in Stockton, Manteca, Lathrop, Lodi, Tracy, Ripon and Escalon, and Thornton during January and February, 2010.

In addition, draft RTP surveys were posted on various websites, including: SJCOG, The Regional Rail Commission, Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce, Lodi Chamber of Commerce, Manteca Chamber of Commerce, El Concilio of San Joaquin, and The San Joaquin League of Women Voters. Fliers of the survey were distributed on the Altamont Corridor Express, the commuter rail line that stretches into the Bay Area.

SJCOG staff presented on the 2011 RTP outreach materials at meetings of the El Concilio, an education group for the Hispanic community, COMA, the San Joaquin umbrella group for all Hispanic organizations, the American Indian Council and the SJCOG Citizens Advisory Committee, where members, including the past two presidents of the local chapter of the NAACP agreed to bring the survey back to their groups.

Samples of the materials provided at the workshops are included in Appendix 5-2.

The comments ranged from project-specific priorities that targeted areas that anticipate future development to suggestions for long-term priorities and strategies for improving the regional transportation system. The comments reflect contrasts between an emphasis on highway interchanges on I-5, SR-99 and SR-120, concern about local roadway conditions and safety, while others focused heavily on alternative transportation modes such as transit and rail.

The project specific comments identified the following projects as priorities:

- ACE Equipment Maintenance Facility
- ACE Service Extensions between the San Joaquin Valley , Sacramento, Modesto, and San Francisco
- Acquisition of ACE Corridor between Niles Junction and Lathrop
- Lathrop Transfer Station
- Bus Rapid Transit Projects
- RTD's Regional Transportation Center
- I-5 HOV Lanes from Hammer to Country Club
- I-5 HOV Lanes from Hammer Lane to North of Eight Mile

- I-205/I580 Truck Climbing Lanes
- SR-4 Operational Improvements
- SR-99 Widening SR-4 to South of Arch Road
- SR-99 Widening Near Lodi, Harney to Peltier
- SR-99 at SR-4 Interchange
- I-5 at SR-4 Interchange
- Louise Avenue Widening
- Lathrop Road Widening
- Pine Street Widening
- Lower Sacramento Road Widening
- Arch Sperry Road Extension from Performance Drive to French Camp Road
- Airport Way Beautification
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- Increase number of bus stops and the frequency of bus service
- Increase investment in rail/bus systems
- Higher Speed Rail

The workshop participants also contributed more general priorities and strategies for the development of the future transportation system. These included:

- Consider social and environmental costs in transportation investments
- Continue to encourage carpooling
- Make trains the primary way people move in/out and within the county

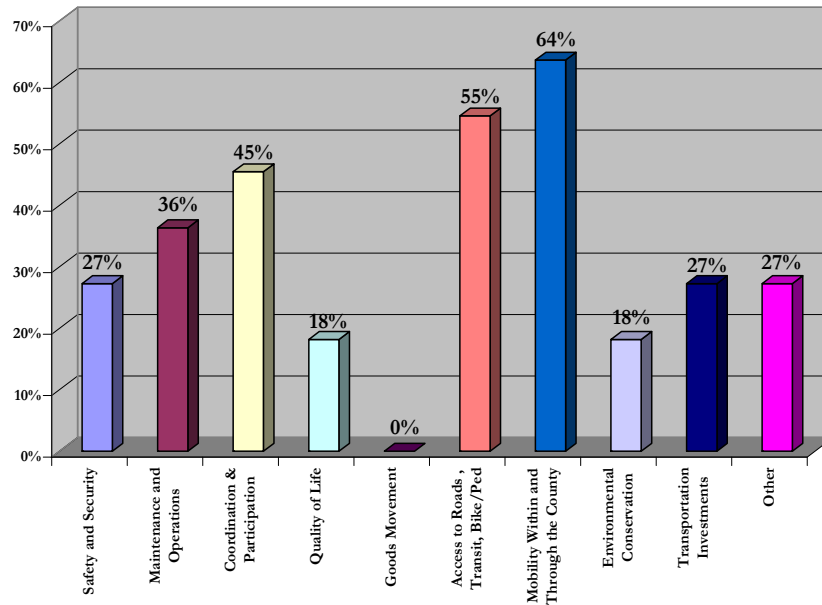
These comments are valuable, and contribute to the emphasis on managing growth in the region through a variety of strategies. The project suggestions are also valuable, although not all of the suggested projects could be included in the 2011 RTP Project List due to revenue source constraints.

### *RTP Short Survey*

SJCOG did not receive a statistically significant number of returned surveys, however the outreach effort did educate the community about the RTP, told them where to find it and provided opportunity for comment. Although not a significantly significant number of surveys were received from public outreach participants, the results of the survey questions are shown in the tables below in recognition that public participation is important to the SJCOG process.

Figure 5-1

2011 RTP Short Survey Question 1:  
What would you like to see in the future transportation system?

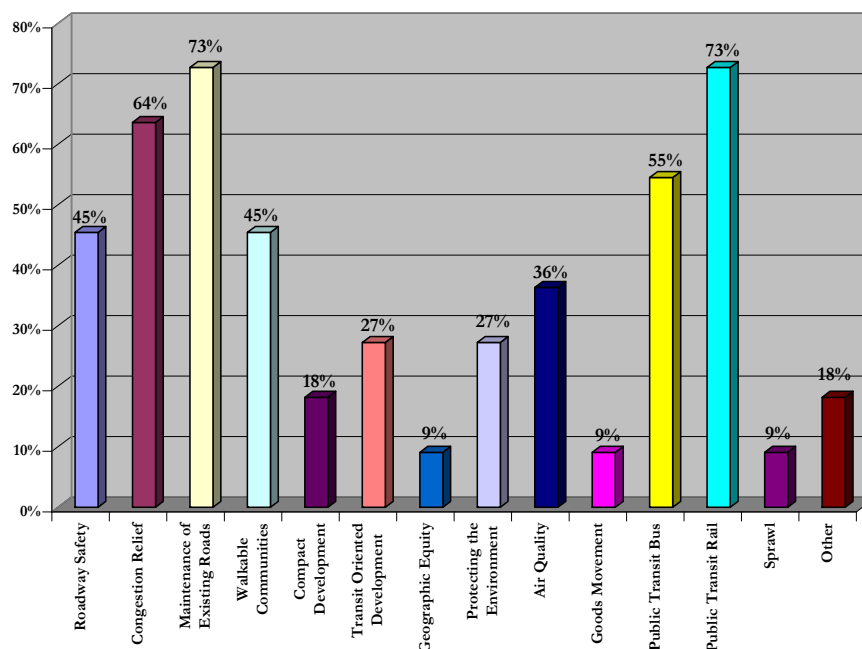


Question 1 asked about the relative importance of the Goals discussed in Chapter 2. For the purposes of this survey, the Goal of Access and Mobility was split into two separate categories. As illustrated in Figure 5-1, coordination and public participation, access to roads, transit, and bicycle pedestrian facilities, and mobility within and through the county topped the responses as important for the future transportation system. Improved Maintenance and Operations was also a high priority.

Additional comments included with Question 1 included request for transit projects that promote coordination. This is consistent with the survey results which suggests coordination and public participation are important factors to the planning process.

Figure 5-2

2011 RTP Short Survey Question 2: What Issues are important to you?



Question 2 asked respondents what issues were important to them. Figure 5-2 illustrates the responses with maintenance of existing roadways, bus transit, and rail transit topping the list.

Question 3 presented respondents with the option to re-distribute transportation funding by major RTP category from the adopted 2007 RTP funding percentages. The following seven pie charts (Figures 5-3 through 5-9) illustrate that the majority of respondents are satisfied with the transportation funding percentages as reflected in the draft 2011 RTP. The percentage funding share of the 2011 RTP for mainline highway projects has declined from the 2007 RTP; the percentage funding share of the 2011 RTP for interchanges has declined from the 2007 RTP; the percentage funding share of the 2011 RTP for local roadway projects has increased from the 2007 RTP; although the public recommended an increase to funding for the railroad crossing safety program the percentage funding share of the 2011 RTP for railroad crossing safety projects has remained unchanged from the 2007 RTP due to funding constraints; the percentage funding share of the 2011 RTP for bus projects has decreased from the 2007 RTP due to funding limitations; the percentage funding share of the 2011 RTP for rail projects has remained unchanged from the 2007 RTP; and the percentage funding share of the 2011 RTP for bike/pedestrian projects has increased from the 2007 RTP. Although this appears to fall in line with the public responses below, declining revenues within these

categories as well as an increased focus on the operations and maintenance of the system also contribute to the decline in funding share for the project categories listed above.

Figure 5-3

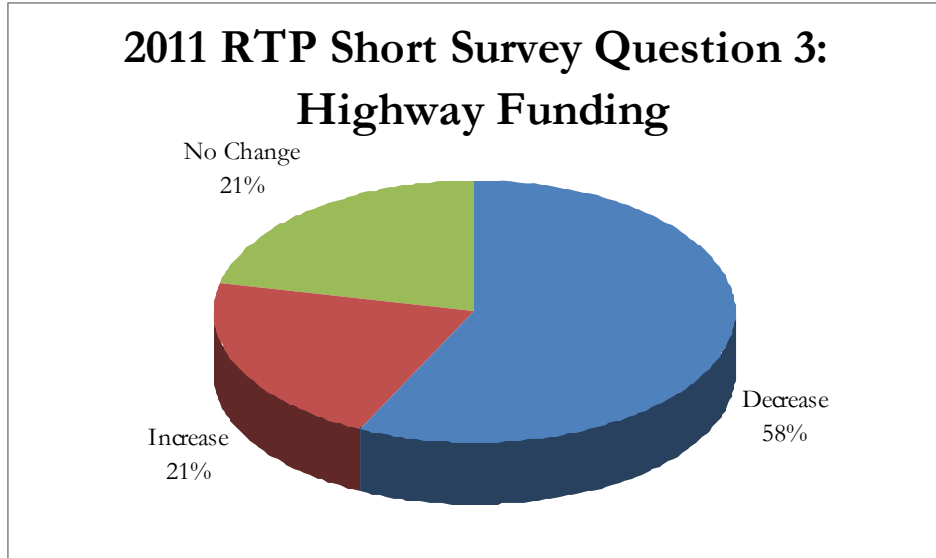


Figure 5-4

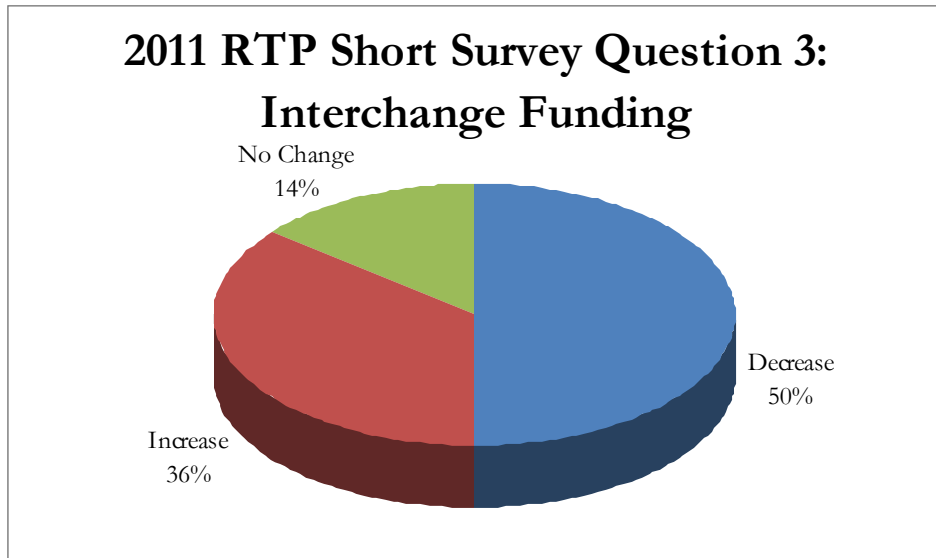


Figure 5-5

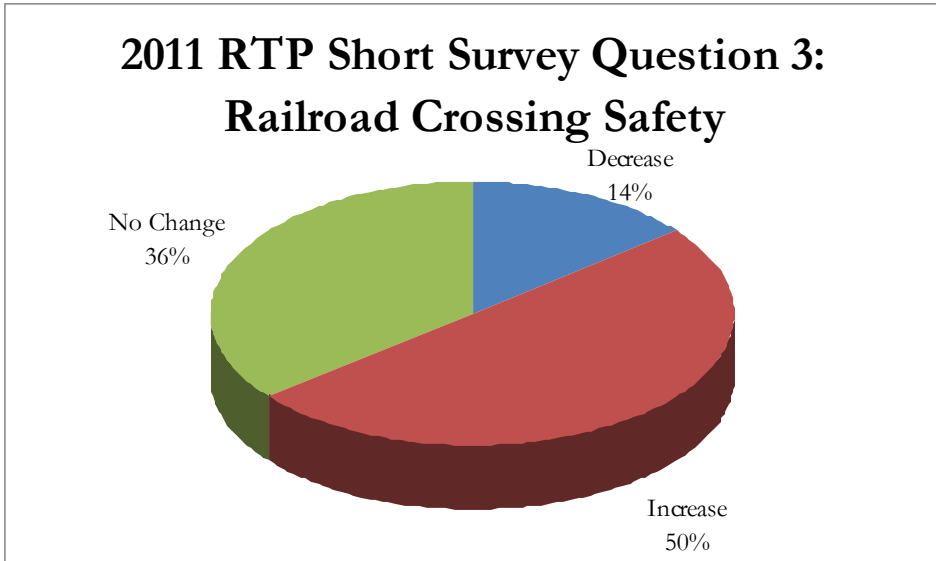


Figure 5-6

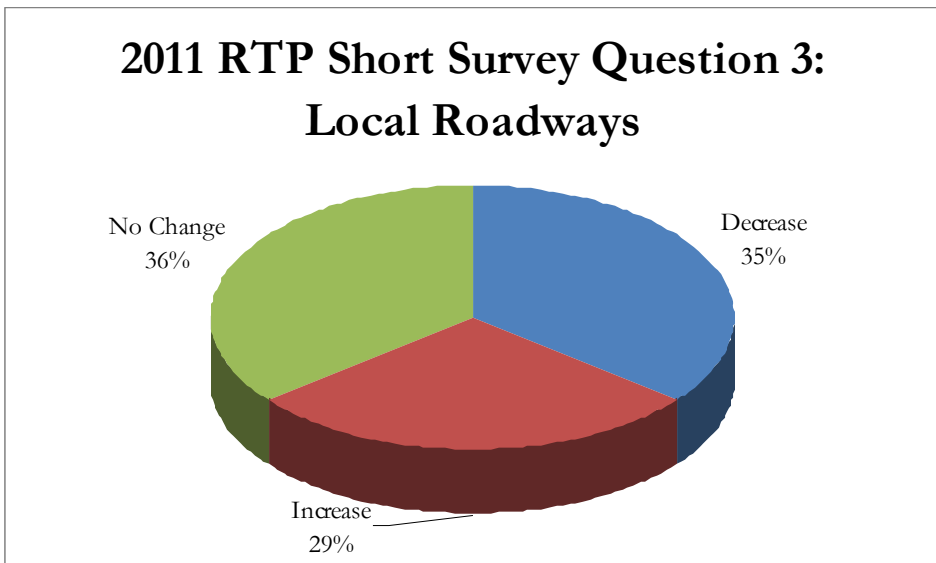


Figure 5-7

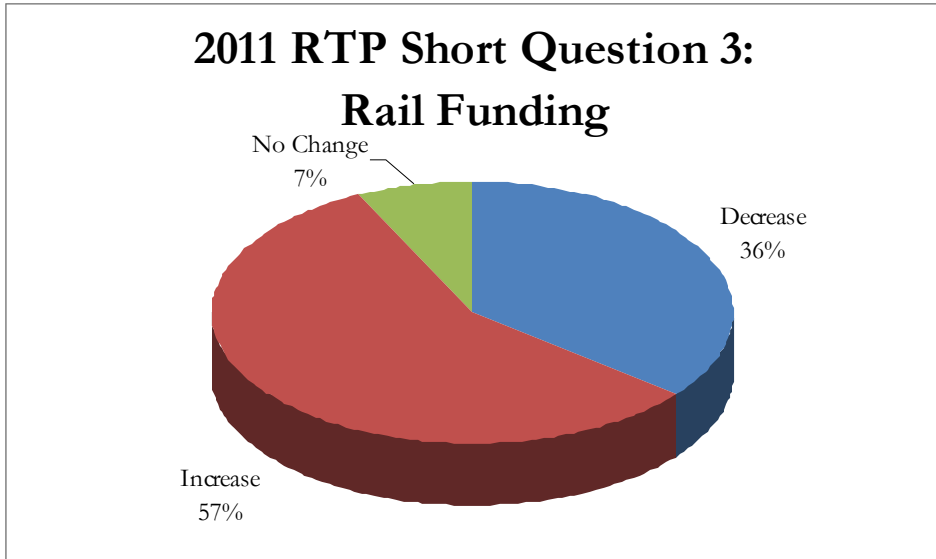


Figure 5-8

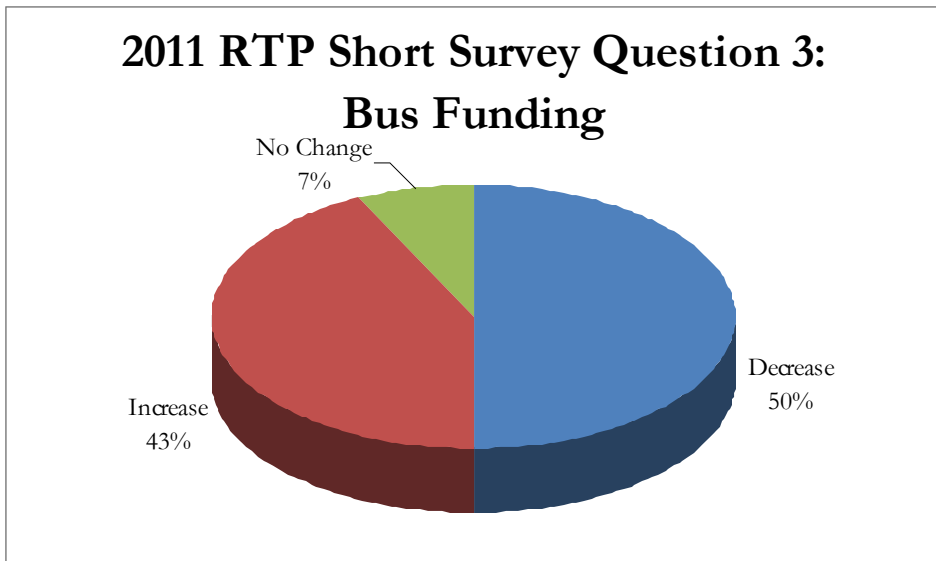
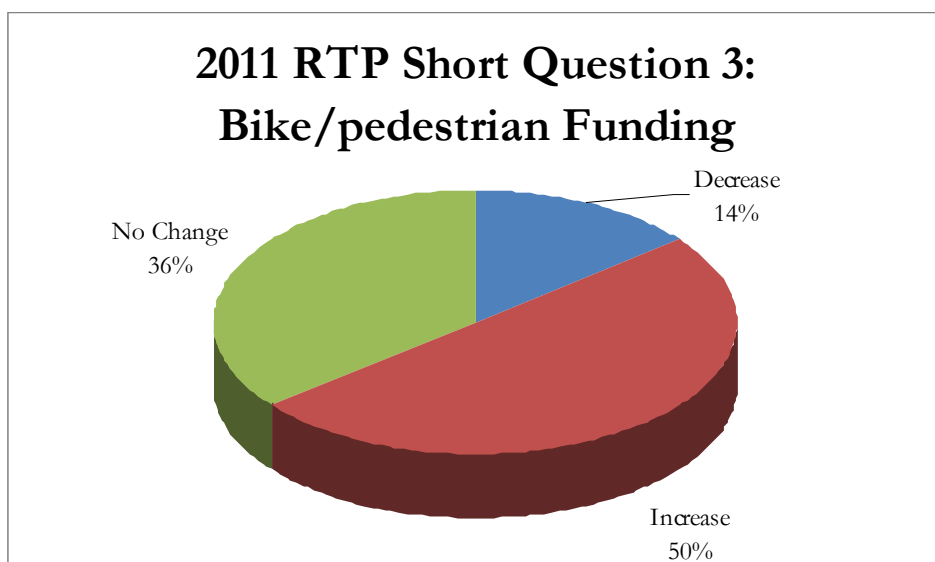


Figure 5-9



Question 4 asked respondents to numerically prioritize the items within five separate categories: Roadway Type, Travel Mode, Transit Service, Transportation Project Type, and Transportation Corridor.

Tables 5-1 through 5-5 below display the results for the first choice pick among each of the five categories.

**Table 5-1: Roadway Type**

RTP Short Survey Question 4A	
	1st Choice
Freeway	58%
Major Cross Street	17%
County Roads	8%
Collector Roads	8%
Other	8%
Total	100%

It is clear from Table 5-1 that freeways are the most important roadway type among respondents, followed by major cross streets.

**Table 5-2: Travel Mode**

<b>RTP Short Survey Question 4B</b>	
	<b>1st Choice</b>
Passenger Vehicle	33%
Carpool/Vanpool	17%
Bus Transit	17%
Walk	8%
Rail Transit	25%
Bike	0%
Other	0%
Total	100%

Table 5-2 reinforces conventional wisdom that the single occupant passenger vehicle continues to dominate the transportation sector. High marks for carpools and rail transit are encouraging.

**Table 5-3: Transit Service**

<b>RTP Short Survey Question 4C</b>	
	<b>1st Choice</b>
City Fixed Route	27%
Bur Rapid Transit	13%
Dial A Ride	0%
Intercity Bus	13%
Interregional Bus	0%
Commuter Rail Service (ACE)	33%
Amtrack	13%
Other	0%
Total	100%

The 33% of respondents indicate that their highest priority for transit service (Table 5-3) is the ACE commuter rail service with 27% preferring traditional fixed route transit services. .

**Table 5-4: Transportation Project Type**

RTP Short Survey Question 4D	
	1st Choice
Safety	31%
Roadway Maintenance	23%
Freeway Interchanges	8%
Road Widening	23%
Signals	8%
Rail Road Crossings	0%
Beautification	8%
Other	0%
Total	100%

The Transportation Project Type question (Table 5-4) moves away from the transit category to ask what type of road project is desirable. Of these, safety, roadway maintenance and road widening come out as the highest public priority.

**Table 5-5: Transportation Corridor**

RTP Short Survey Question 4E	
	1st Choice
I-5 North of Crosstown	18%
I-5 South of Crosstown	9%
SR-99 North of Crosstown	18%
SR-99 South of Crosstown	9%
I-205	9%
SR-120	9%
Crosstown Freeway	18%
SR-12	9%
Other	0%
Total	100%

Question 4E on the prioritization of the major transportation corridors mirrors the anticipated future development planning for San Joaquin County. I-5 in North Stockton anticipates continued growth of new home development.

Overall, the survey responses from the 2011 RTP outreach effort reinforce and contribute to the development of the future transportation system in San Joaquin County. Survey results show it is clear that although passenger cars remain important, there is a desire to maintain momentum in developing alternative modes of

transportation, increasing the safety and security of the transportation system, and managing the growth in the region.

## **Interagency Consultation**

The fundamental interagency consultation efforts for the 2011 RTP are well established both for San Joaquin County and Valley wide. SJCOG has several standing committees through which RTP-related items are discussed with local cities and the county. These committees include the: Technical Advisory Committee, Social Service Transportation Advisory Council, Citizen's Advisory Committee, Manager's and Finance Committee, Executive Committee, and SJCOG Board. These meetings are open to the public, and include time for public comment. SJCOG also staffs the Interagency Transit Committee, which is made up of transit operators throughout the county.

The San Joaquin Valley MPOs hold ongoing Interagency Consultation Group meetings attended by MPO staff from across the Valley, the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District, Caltrans District and Headquarters, Air Resources Board, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Federal Highway and Transit Administrations.

The San Joaquin Valley Directors also meet periodically to discuss higher level policy matters that frequently include air quality or coordinated transportation planning issues. Throughout the RTP development process, the MPO directors were regularly updated and consulted on a variety of issues.

The San Joaquin Valley MPOs also sponsored two Interagency workshops (August, 2009 and February 2010) to discuss the Valley MPOs progress in development of the 2011 RTPs. Participants in these workshops included Air Resources Board; Caltrans Headquarters, Districts 6, and District 10; Federal Highway Administration, U.S. EPA; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District; the 8 San Joaquin Valley MPOs. Topics of discussion for the workshops include: updates on the 2011 RTP development process undertaken by each MPO; the San Joaquin Valley conformity process; and public outreach efforts. The goal of each workshop was to facilitate an open discussion between the Valley MPOs and state and federal partner agencies in the development of the 2011 RTPs. Agendas and workshop participant list can be found in appendix 5-5

Interagency consultation also took place in the context of the 2011 RTP Programmatic Environmental Impact Report as required by CEQA. The Notice of Preparation was distributed to interested parties and stakeholder agencies, and a 45-day comment period and public hearing were held during May/June 2010.

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