TO: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: George Dondero, Executive Director
RE: Director’s Report

For Information Only

CTC Town Hall Meeting

Thanks to RTC Commissioners who attended a very successful Town Hall meeting and with seven members of the California Transportation Commission October 10th, and reception the day before. The two events were well attended by board members and staff from all five counties in the Central Coast Coalition – Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara. Special thanks go to Yesenia Parra and Rachel Moriconi of our staff for coordinating the event. Feedback from directors at the partner counties indicate that we had “raised the bar” for providing a great venue and a well executed event that was held at the Museum of Art and History in Santa Cruz. Several CTC commissioners also made very favorable remarks about the town hall at their regular meeting the following week.

A major theme of our presentations and discussions was the need to develop adequate funding for transportation. CTC Commissioners proposed that we coordinate a workshop or series of workshops with commissioners and our legislative delegation to discuss project delivery reforms and funding needs—I also hope they take Jim up on his offer to hold a Central Coast town hall every year.

Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line

Santa Cruz and Monterey Bay (SC&MB) Railway has been providing the freight rail service in the Watsonville area with two locomotives that they brought in. SC&MB Railway hired Industrial Railways Company to upgrade the rail line up to Class 1 track from the boardwalk area (milepost 19.5) to milepost 26.5. Industrial Railways Company will also do some temporary shoring work on the bridge at milepost 4.87. Once the track and bridge work are completed, SC&MB Railway will bring in passenger equipment.
Caltrans and staff from the cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola and the County of Santa Cruz have contacted RTC staff regarding projects that involve working on, along or crossing the rail line right-of-way. These include Highway 1 barrier rail improvements in Aptos, improvements at the Highway 1 grade crossing in Davenport, sewage pipeline improvements along 17th Avenue, Neary Lagoon management, wharf corporation yard improvements in the City of Santa Cruz, and pedestrian improvements to the city hall parking lot in Capitola. Other community interests have also approached RTC staff regarding placing fiber optic cable on the rail line and a cell phone service antenna on the Capitola bridge.

Some of these may generate some additional revenue for the RTC. Examples include temporary construction easements, new crossing or longitudinal easements, increased lease areas, etc. RTC staff will work with these entities to obtain the needed information, coordinate with SC&MB Railway as necessary and prepare reports to the RTC with appropriate recommendations. To adequately consider some of the projects, it may be necessary for the RTC to contract with a real estate management consultant.

**Right on Track: Rail Corridor Ribbon Cutting**

...is a community event to recognize public ownership of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line to be held on Saturday, November 17. Whistle stop events will be held in five locations:

- **Watsonville at 9:00 -10:00am,**
- **Aptos at 10:00 -11:00 am,**
- **Capitola at 11:00am -noon,**
- **Live Oak at noon-1:00 pm,** and the
- **Westside of Santa Cruz from 1:00 -6:00 pm.**

Each stop will feature music, history and refreshments. Attendance is welcome at one or all five! In addition, free “preview” train rides will be available from the Santa Cruz site. Each Commissioner will receive 4 tickets. **Reserved tickets** (4 per household) will be available for the public on the RTC website starting **November 8 at noon.** Posters and flyers are now available and a few have been placed at each of your seats. Please help distribute them to your friends, family, neighbors and constituents.