Neal Coonerty: Transportation infrastructure is not free
By Neal Coonerty Santa Cruz Sentinel Santa Cruz Sentinel
Posted: SantaCruzSentinel.com

Neal Coonerty

The Sunday, March 24 edition of the Sentinel contained an opinion piece with a good deal of misinformation. While this isn't particularly unusual in opinion pieces (after all, they are opinions), this one was so off base about the Regional Transportation Commission's plans for the recently acquired 32-mile rail corridor, that it needs a response.

What are the facts?

First, the RTC is strongly committed to a transportation system that provides a range of alternatives for getting around.

It took almost two decades and significant community support to acquire the rail corridor. The intent of acquiring the continuous 32-mile transportation corridor is to increase the number of transportation options for the community. In the short term, this will include freight and seasonal/recreational train service, and a bicycle and pedestrian trail that will be located adjacent to the operational tracks. The latter will be constructed in segments as funds become available. In the longer term, other passenger rail and transit options will be analyzed to determine what is feasible and best suits the mobility needs of residents and visitors. With over one hundred attractions and half the county's population located 1/2 mile from the rail corridor, confining the corridor to only one use (a trail) would be irresponsible and uneconomical considering not only today's transportation challenges but also tomorrow’s transportation, economic and environmental challenges.

In addition to securing and upgrading the new rail corridor, the RTC also is constructing a pair of auxiliary lanes on Highway 1, funding local road projects, carpool programs, transit, bicycle lanes and sidewalks.

Second, most transportation is publicly funded.

Roads, highways, bike lanes, sidewalks and transit are typically funded by a mix of user fees (such as fuel tax or bridge tolls) and non-specific tax revenues (like income, property and sales tax). The costs for many other community resources and services -- schools, law enforcement, fire protection, parks -- are also borne by society, as it is impractical to pay for them through user fees. While it makes sense to pursue programs and projects that are beneficial to the community, there are many ways to measure both costs and benefits. No one expects a local road to be self-supporting or profitable. A future commuter rail service, if that is the option desired by the community, would not be different. The RTC and short line rail operator, Iowa Pacific, have a public/private partnership that requires IP to pay maintenance costs of the rail facility in exchange for the revenues they receive for providing recreational passenger and freight rail services. If revenues exceed a specified threshold the RTC will receive payment from Iowa Pacific.

Third, voters -- both in Santa Cruz County and the state -- approved rail funding. Acquisition of the 32-mile branch rail line was funded using voter-approved Proposition 116 funding expressly to
facilitate passenger rail service. The Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) committed to offering recreational rail service between Santa Cruz and Davenport, and opted to analyze other potential options for passenger rail after completion of the acquisition and transfer of the transportation corridor from private to public hands. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) approved use of our county's share of Proposition 116 funds with the commitment to establish future passenger rail service. Included in the CTC approval was an agreement to fund bridge rehabilitation along the line to accommodate rail service. Confining use of the corridor to only a trail is not possible, given our funding commitments.

Fourth, planning for a coastal trail is nearly completed.

One of the most puzzling aspects of the March 24 article is the absence of discussion about the development of a master plan for a coastal rail trail in the County. The RTC released a comprehensive draft Master Plan (http://sccrtc.org/projects/multi-modal/monterey-bay-sanctuary-scenic-trail/mbst-master-plan/) and held well publicized public meetings last November. The Draft Environmental Impact Report will be out later this spring. Segments of the trail will be constructed as funding becomes available, though the goal is to move forward as quickly as possible.

Last, let's plan for the long view.

The publicly owned rail line is now a public resource. Any decisions made on its future use will also be made as part of a public process. Our best strategy is to maximize mobility options and keep our future transportation options open.

Neal Coonerty is chair of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission and a county supervisor.
Paul Schoellhamer: Keep the rail trail on track

Santa Cruz Sentinel

Posted: SantaCruzSentinel.com

Paul Schoellhamer

Think tearing up the tracks would get the rail trail built sooner? Think again. Tearing up the tracks would devastate our chances of getting the rail trail built in our lifetimes.

Much of the funding to build the rail trail will come from the California Transportation Commission, which also provided the state funding for local purchase of the rail line and for rehab of the rail trestles. That state funding provided to our county by the CTC was by law for rail purposes, and the only way we got that money was by committing to operate some level of rail service. If we now tear up the tracks and go to the CTC and say we'd like other funds to build the trail, they are likely to find other projects in the state more worthy of their commitment. It will be extremely difficult to get the rail trail built without funding from the CTC.

Keep in mind as well that a majority of all funding received by our local Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) for transportation projects anywhere in our county is allocated to us by the CTC and can be allocated to other parts of the state. In fact, in the past few years it has been a very substantial majority.

Our local RTC is the countywide entity that now owns the rail line thanks to the CTC and has quite rightly put the rail trail on the fast track (so to speak). Within a couple of months of acquiring the line they made public a draft master plan for a trail along the entire length of the rail line, from the Pajaro River to beyond Davenport. Separated from car traffic and very nearly level, it will be incredibly popular with residents and tourists alike. Public response has been overwhelmingly favorable.

In contrast, any consideration of significantly expanding passenger rail service is on a much more deliberate track. RTC is just beginning to analyze future rail options. For now and the foreseeable future we meet our rail obligations to the CTC with occasional freight service and occasional recreational service. Any decision to do significantly more than that is many years away, a time period in which RTC will study options, make information available to the public, and provide for a thorough public discussion of options. For those who want to argue for or against increased rail service, that's the time and place to do so. And there will be lots of time for those arguments.

If we were to now put that long-term rail decision ahead of building the trail, that would take the trail off the fast track and put it behind the train on the slow track. The RTC has it right by saying we should build the trail first and then consider over a much longer term whether we want to increase rail service or not. Who knows, our decision on the rail question may hang on how much gasoline costs years from now, not something we have any way of knowing today.

So let's not hold the rail trail hostage to endless debates about the long-term future of rail. Let's get to work now on building the rail trail as proposed in the draft master plan, and we'll have years to discuss and decide what level of rail service is appropriate to our community in the long term. First things first.

Paul Schoellhamer is a retired congressional staffer specializing in transportation and environment issues, and is now on the Board of Friends of the Rail & Trail.
Brian Peoples: Santa Cruz can't afford a train and rail
By Brian Peoples Santa Cruz Sentinel Santa Cruz Sentinel
Posted: SantaCruzSentinel.com

Brian Peoples

We are concerned with the overreaching efforts being made by Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) to establish a passenger service rather than looking at a more economical and effective approach to using the Santa Cruz Corridor for improved mobility, i.e., bike/pedestrian trail and improvement in surface-streets. We believe that the County cannot afford a train and trail, and their continued strategy to put a priority on a train over a trail and surface-street improvements will unnecessarily delay the effective use of the Santa Cruz Corridor.

Multiple studies have shown rail is not viable due to limits to train speed, low-density population, County budget cannot afford to subsidize a train, no industrial operations exist to allow for freight, single track does not allow for effective service schedule and no industry or business exist in the region to help sustain commuter demand. Public response to the tourist train was negative due to loud train horn and increased traffic congestion, and embarrassment of tourist train operator (Iowa Pacific) building fake Christmas Town north of Santa Cruz.

Former Supervisor Ellen Pirie stated in 4Q12 the RTC must initiate passenger rail service and we are doing that through Iowa Pacific. I think that real passenger service on the line is not economically viable now or in the foreseeable future. The agreement with the state on purchasing the rail line does not require the RTC to repay the state if passenger rail service is not economically viable, which the RTC clearly communicated to the state. RTC is committed to initiating passenger service, but not maintaining it for any set period of time. It is important that the public understand that if the tourist train is not viable, RTC can do what it wants with the corridor and not have to refund the state.

Based on the fact that Executive Director George Dondero travelled to Sacramento on March 20 to meet with state legislators in order to support proposed legislation that would lower the voter threshold to 55 percent for new transportation-related tax initiatives makes it clear that RTC is looking to raise taxes on Santa Cruz County residences and businesses to move forward with a passenger train service. RTC maybe successful in their effort to raise taxes and eventually build a passenger train service, but while we wait, the Santa Cruz Corridor remains abandoned and a channel for drug users, crime, homeless encampments and community decay.

RTC has "drunken train blinders" that is preventing them from looking at effective alternatives for using the Santa Cruz Corridor, even temporarily while they build their plan for passenger train service. At the February RTC meeting, Item 21 on "Project Alternatives for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network Draft Environmental Impact Report," staff gave a recommendation to find alternatives that still fulfill the goals of a trail network. None included looking at eliminating the railroad tracks permanently or even temporarily.

At the end of the day, RTC owns the property (with our tax dollars) and they are going to keep moving towards a plan to build a passenger service and bike path. Looking at their strategy to support a tax bond measures that lower the threshold to less than 55 percent vote, they are hopeful that it will eventually be a train and trail. This plan is going to take a long, long time. In the meantime, we would hope that RTC would look at creative, alternative approaches to use the corridor for a trail and surface-street improvements -- at least temporarily, i.e., years.

We have no say how RTC will use their property and the plans RTC staff formulates, but we do have influence on our elected representatives who sit on the RTC Board. If the Santa Cruz Corridor is only used for a tourist train for 10 years, we advocate that we find elected officials who can work at finding more effective uses of our tax dollars.

Brian Peoples, an engineer for a high tech company, lives in Aptos with his wife Susan and children Matti, 15 and Patrick, 12. He was the President of Aptos Little League last year and is actively involved in learning how to move forward with better transportation within Santa Cruz County.

Brian Peoples and Dr. Rob Quinn: Santa Cruz Corridor a key community resource

By Brian Peoples and Dr. Rob Quinn Sentinel contributors Santa Cruz Sentinel

The Santa Cruz corridor -- aka the railroad tracks -- is a key resource to our community, and it is important that the public participate in its long term development plans.

The Regional Transportation Commission's master plan for a coastal trail in the county is commendable and clearly shows their commitment to a bike/pedestrian trail along the corridor. The concern is the idea of making it parallel to the railroad tracks is very unlikely due to the high cost ($89 million), not including the millions for construction and operation of a future rail system.

The fact that the RTC has a strategy to have a rail service and a bike trail may be placing too much of the county's funds into this single transportation system. Prioritizing a train over surface-street improvements and Highway 1 widening will have a major negative impact on the overall transportation system within the county.

In addition to unrealistic expectations of funding, the RTC is failing to incorporate how technology is changing vehicle systems. Train supporters like to highlight the fact that in 1990, 60 percent of voters supported Proposition 116, so the majority of Santa Cruz residents support the Tourist Train. But 1990 was the year the World Wide Web was created, and cellphones were bigger than a shoebox, very expensive and not reliable. Technology has advanced significantly from 25 years ago, and what was practical then is not necessarily practical today.

The lifecycle of products are changing at a very fast pace, including those technologies related to vehicle systems. A good analogy to how product lifecycles change can be looked at computing systems (mainframes to smartphones). In today's transportation environment, we can look at train technology as the mainframe and vehicles as smartphones.

Automobile manufacturers are integrating vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) systems, designed to allow automobiles to "talk" to each other for improved safety and efficiency on the roadways. V2V is becoming a reality and the technology has been successfully demonstrated in Europe in the form of road trains. In 2012, researchers studied how effective vehicles equipped with V2V increase efficiency in the highway capacity due to the fact that vehicles can safely travel closer together. Their research showed that when traveling at 65 mph, if all vehicles had V2V, the capacity can be increased by almost 300 percent. In the future, Highway 1 capacity could go from 6,000 cars per hour to 24,000.

On April 23, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration announced new guidelines for auto companies to follow as they develop in-car communication systems.

The federal government is asking automakers to phase in the guidelines within three years, so there may be more incentives to install V2V systems sooner than later.

Realistic budget planning and the incorporation of vehicle technologies should have more weighed value in RTC's long-term transportation plans. A plan that focuses on a passenger rail service along the Santa Cruz corridor does not meet either one of these criteria and the RTC should limit its time spent on such excursions.

The sooner the tourist train ends, the sooner we can more effectively use the corridor.

Brian Peoples and Dr. Rob Quinn both live in Aptos.
Grant Proposal to Build Trails Submitted

On April 30 RTC staff submitted a proposal to the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Network. The purpose of the FLAP is to provide funds for roadways, bridges, trails, and transit systems that are located on, are adjacent to, or provide access to Federal Lands and California Coast National Monuments. The program emphasizes projects that provide access to high-use recreation sites or are economic generators. Staff requested $21M to construct 15 miles of trails for Segments 5 through 7 - from Davenport to the National Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center near the City of Santa Cruz Wharf entrance. Those segments qualified since they provide access to California Coast National Monuments. Some highlights of the grant include:

- California Coast National Monuments include rocks, exposed reefs, and pinnacles. In Santa Cruz they are primarily located from the wharf in the City of Santa Cruz north to the San Mateo County line. These lands are under the jurisdiction of the BLM who certified that this project would provide access to those monuments. The Coast Dairies properties along the north coast are also soon to be transferred to BLM jurisdiction and will be accessible from the trail.
- A non-federal match of 11.47% was required. The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County committed to provide $2.8 million for the match.
- The MBSST project is an excellent candidate for the grant program since it will provide active transportation, recreation and eco-tourism facilities within the coastal corridor.
- RTC will be notified in June if the project made the short list and then staff will have to scope the project in more detail for final consideration in late June or July. Final awards are to be made in August.
- After the MBSST Master Plan is adopted later this year, staff will present recommendations to program our remaining funds (about $5.5M) to construct segment(s) in south county so as to approach equitable geographic distribution of available funds.
- An excellent video was submitted with the grant which was produced by volunteers Eric Thiermann of TheImpactMediaGroup.com and Paul
Schoelhamer, a local resident with a keen interest in supporting active transportation. Our heartfelt thanks go to the many staff at the RTC and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Paul Schoelhamer and Eric Thiermann and those who provided support letters, and special kudos to RTC Senior Planners Cory Caletti and Rachel Moriconi who led the effort. A more detailed Fact Sheet is attached.

Earth Day with Commute Solutions

RTC's Commute Solutions team celebrated Earth Day in a big way this year conducting outreach activities with schools, businesses and at events throughout the County. Highlights include:

- Tabling at Cabrillo's "Transportation Transformation" teach-in and fair at both the Aptos and Watsonville campuses
- Planning and co-sponsoring (along with Cruzio, NextSpace and the Satellite Centers) the first ever "Skip the Commute" event promoting teleworking
- Educating Pajaro Chamber Business Expo attendees about Commute Solutions services as part of the RTC Transportation Jeopardy game (along with staff members Karena Pushnik and Yesenia Parra)
- Participating in the Boltage Photo Day and prizes at DeLaveaga Elementary as part of RTC's Highway 1 TDM program (along with Ecology Action and other program sponsors)
- Promoting the chance to test drives electric vehicles at the Earth Day festival (offered by Ecology Action and local car dealers)

Railroad Bridge Fire

On the evening of Sunday, April 21st a bridge fire caused extensive damage to a timber railroad bridge in Wilder Ranch State Park at milepost 23.54. This is a small bridge about 20 feet in length and 15 feet in height. The bridge was included in the bid package for railroad bridge rehabilitation. Since bids have not been submitted yet, the bid package is being amended to include full replacement of the bridge. Since the bridge is small, it may be replaced with a like structure or a culvert and fill. The culvert and fill is a less expensive replacement option and would also be less expensive to maintain.
Bike Week – May 3rd – 11th

This year is the 26th annual Bike to Work and School Week, funded in part by the RTC and Ecology Action, with many sponsors including the cities of Watsonville, Capitola and Santa Cruz, and numerous local companies. More information may be found at www.Bike2Work.com

Community Leadership Visit

April 14 – 16 saw a group of fifty or so Santa Cruz County community leaders from business, government and education travel to Boulder and Fort Collins, Colorado to see what we could learn from those two communities. I was pleased to be among this group, in what has become an annual event sponsored by the Santa Cruz Area Chamber. We returned humbled, inspired and thinking more deeply about what can happen when a community decides to focus on becoming a center of innovation through economic, environmental and social entrepreneurship. Collaboration was a consistent theme throughout the visit, and the results are impressive. In transportation alone, both communities demonstrate foresight and dedication to providing a more sustainable system for residents and visitors. The ability to try new approaches to old problems was impressive. Boulder has consolidated several administrative units into the Department of Community Planning and Sustainability that includes environmental action, economic vitality, regional sustainability, strategic planning, and development review. We saw many examples of the Triple Bottom Line being applied and the successes that manifest.

Attachments:
1. MBSST Federal Lands Access Program Grant – Fact Sheet
Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST)  
Federal Lands Access Program Grant  
Fact Sheet – May 1, 2013

Funding Opportunity

- In March, Caltrans and the U.S. Department of Transportation: Central Federal Lands Highway Division issued a call for projects for $130 million available in California from the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) through 2019. This program provides funds for roadways, bridges, trails, and transit systems that are located on, are adjacent to, or provide access to Federal Lands. The emphasis of the program is on projects that provide access to high-use recreation sites or are economic generators.
- Applications were due April 30, 2013.
- This grant program requires a non-federal match of 11.47%. The Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) has $332,000 in funds currently designated to the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST) that can provide a portion of the match. The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is committed to providing $2.8 million in matching funds.

The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST)

- The RTC has been working with the community to develop a multiuse bicycle/pedestrian trail network along the coast, called the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST).
- The MBSST includes construction of over 50 miles of new trails in Santa Cruz County, including a trail along the 31 mile railroad right-of-way from Davenport to Watsonville and spur trails connecting other existing and proposed trails along the coast.

MBSST: Providing Access to Federal Lands

- In Santa Cruz County, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST) provides access to the federally-designated California Coastal National Monument (CCNM). The California Coastal National Monument comprises more than 20,000 small islands, rocks, exposed reefs, and pinnacles between Mexico and Oregon. In Santa Cruz County, these lands are primarily located from the wharf in the City of Santa Cruz north to the San Mateo County line. These lands are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The project also provides access to the Coast Dairies property, being transferred to the BLM by June 2013.
- The RTC has worked with FHWA, Caltrans, BLM and local jurisdictions to determine which sections of the MBSST are the best candidates for this grant program.
- The RTC is requesting funds for development of portions of the trail in Segments 5 through 7 (between Davenport and the Beach St/West Cliff Drive/Wharf intersection in the City of Santa Cruz) due to proximity to California Coast National Monument locations.
- Segments 5 through 7 will provide approximately 15 miles of new coastal bicycle and pedestrian trails. Of the 15 miles, 11 are paved and separated from motor vehicle...
traffic and 4 miles would be unpaved spurs that would provide greater connectivity to natural environments. Segment 5 (10.6 total miles) is estimated to cost $13.4M, Segment 6 (which would include a new pre-fabricated bicycle and pedestrian crossing of Antonelli pond and is 1.74 miles in total) is estimated to cost $4.4M, and Segment 7 (4.95 miles total) is estimated to cost $6.3M.

- Based on input from Caltrans, the RTC is submitting an application for up to $25 million from the Federal Lands Access Program, breaking out what could be done for smaller grant amounts.

**Project Benefits**

- This trail project is an excellent candidate for the FLAP grant program as an active transportation, recreational and eco-tourism facility.
- The project constructs a continuous multi-use bicycle and pedestrian trail separate from roadway vehicle traffic, improving safety and mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- The trail will enhance appreciation of the coastal environment and enhance understanding and protection of ecological, historical and agricultural working landscapes. By increasing access to the California Coastal National Monument, the project provides opportunities to educate the public about this Federal Land.
- Provides greater travel options to and within parks, beaches, schools, downtown areas, community centers and residential areas that line the coast. For the portion of the MBSST proposed for FLAP funding, this includes improved access to and between Wilder Ranch State Park, Coast Dairies, Younger Lagoon, Natural Bridges State Park, Lighthouse Field, San Hill Bluffs, schools, residences, and businesses.
- The project advances federal, state, and local goals and objectives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants, by providing alternatives to driving to access the coastline. The project will also reduce congestion and travel time, especially through urbanized areas, by providing alternatives to driving cars between coastal destinations.
- Reduces need for automobile parking facilities along the coast by making it possible to bike or walk safely to destinations along the coast. Often, cars park along the shoulders of roadways, which impacts habitat, makes it more dangerous for bicyclists, and can be dangerous for drivers as vehicles attempt to merge onto Highway 1.
- It provides safe and direct bicycle and pedestrian access to areas of the coastline not currently accessible, as well as filling gaps and providing important connections between other trails, including the California Coastal Trail.
- Provides safe alternative to bicycling on Highway 1. Currently Highway 1 is heavily used by bicyclists and there have been several collisions between bicyclists and automobiles. By providing an alternate to Highway 1, this project will reduce automobile/bicycle conflicts. Additionally, many people do not feel comfortable riding on Highway 1 adjacent to cars traveling at high speeds. Constructing a trail that is separated from automobile traffic will increase the number of people traveling by bicycle.
- The Santa Cruz County coastline is already a major destination for tourists. The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST) will further support the region’s thriving tourist based economy. By improving access to the coast, the project will also support tourist related businesses such as motels, restaurants, gift shops, bicycle shops, wineries and markets.
The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST) has received broad support from members of the community, elected officials, business groups, state and federal agencies. This includes the Coastal Commission, California Coastal Conservancy, State Parks, and Congressman Farr among others. The draft trail Master Plan has been developed based on extensive input received from stakeholders and the public.

Congressman Sam Farr has been a long time champion of this project and originally gave it legs by securing $4.5 million in federal appropriations.

**Next Steps**

- In June, the U.S. Department of Transportation: Central Federal Lands Highway Division will notify the RTC if the project made the short list of projects, at which point final project scoping would take place in coordination with the federal agencies and final awards made in August.
- Upon award, funding agreements would be finalized. Environmental review and design engineering could begin in 2014, with construction to be completed by 2018.
Highway 1 Corridor
Environmental Analysis

Project Updates
May, 2013
Agenda

Highway 1 Corridor Environmental Analysis

- Project Overview
- Environmental
- Engineering
- Schedule

Note: refer to acronym sheet at the end of presentation
Corridor Limits

- 9 miles on Highway 1 - San Andreas to Morrissey
Planned Improvements

- Mobility improvements along and across the corridor: Transit, Cars, Bicycles, and Pedestrians
- Increase transit and carpool use - (HOV) lanes
- Ramp modifications: metering, HOV bypass & auxiliary lanes
- Three new bicycle/pedestrian overcrossings
- Traffic Operations Systems equipment (e.g. electronic Changeable Message Signs)
Purpose and Need

- Purpose of the Highway 1 Corridor Environmental Analysis

  - Reduce Congestion
  - Encourage Carpooling and Use Of Alternative Transportation Modes as Means to Increase Capacity
  - Improve Safety
Purpose and Need

• Existing and Anticipated Needs to Address

- Recurrent congestion
- Existing and future delays for commuters, commerce, and emergency vehicles
- Disincentives to use transit; congestion prevents cost-effective transit service
- Disincentives to carpool and lack of supporting facilities
- Accident rates exceed statewide averages
- “Cut-Through” traffic on local streets
Caltrans prepared PSR for 5 miles of improvements

Approved purpose and need. Project limit 9 miles

Traffic operations reports

Initiated project approvals/ environmental documentation

Public input meetings

Preliminary Engineering for two build alternatives

Project Timeline

2002

2003

2004

2005

2007-2009

2009-2011
**Project Timeline**

- **Review transfer to District 5 Tiered Approach**
- **DED Public Circulation**
- **Final EIR/EA to FHWA**
- **Administrative Draft EIR/EA Tiered Document**
- **Select Preferred Alternative**
- **FHWA Approval**

- **2011**
- **June 2013**
- **January 2014**
- **Summer 2014**
- **Winter 2015**
- **2015**
Environmental Tiering

• Why Tiering?

- FHWA approval requires “reasonably available” funding for project
- Establishes overall 9-mile HOV corridor for planning
- Assesses & approves fundable first project for construction
- Streamlines future tiered project approvals
Tiering: Advantages

- Evaluates long-term corridor (Tier I) improvements at planning level—establishes the “footprint”
- Clears highest priority corridor project (Tier II) for construction
- Streamlines delivery of future corridor improvements
Tiering: Advantages

- Clears future projects with lower-level environmental document
- Reduces current costs—mitigation only at first project level
- Saves time—permits are for projects only, expediting approvals
- Provides a flexible tool for incremental public investment in Highway 1 Corridor
Tiering: Challenges

- Added cost to RTC to transform previous draft EIR/EA
- Requires new environmental document and federal permits for each subsequent future project
- More complex for public comprehension—requiring more outreach
Tiering Hwy 1 Corridor

• Tier I Corridor: Morrissey to San Andreas
  ▪ Focus on broad issues
    ➢ Establish logical termini & independent utility for HOV
    ➢ Present preliminary project funding and phasing plan
    ➢ Cumulative impacts

• Tier II Project: Soquel to 41st + Chanticleer Ped/Bike Overcrossing
  ▪ Construction-level details
    ➢ Demonstrate operationally independence
    ➢ Document environmental impact
    ➢ Identify mitigation measures
Tier I Corridor - Alternatives Under Consideration

- **No Build Alternative**
  - Does not address corridor purpose and need but offers comparison with impacts of other alternatives

- **Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative**
  - Lower cost improvements to partly address corridor purpose and need without adding capacity

- **High Occupancy Vehicle Lane (HOV) Alternative**
  - Designed to fully address corridor purpose and need
Key Issues

- Median Widths
- Interchange Review
- Engineering Design -
  - Optimize local circulation
  - Caltrans standard design and right of way impacts

✓ Caltrans conceptual agreement on corridor footprint
Tier I Corridor: Engineering - Special Studies

- **Sustainable Design Elements**
  - Incorporate sustainable design elements

- **Mobility Assessment**
  - Transit Market Analysis (access and usage)
  - Bike Path Feasibility
  - Mainline vehicular movements
  - Vehicular movements at ramp termini (safety)
  - Pedestrian movements at interchanges and overcrossings
Tier II: Engineering - Project Limits

- Standard Auxiliary Lanes
- Chanticleer Ped/Bike Overcrossing
- Total Project Cost $27M Final Design, ROW, & Construction
  - Auxiliary Lanes $20M, Bike/Ped OC - $7M
Tier II: Engineering - Auxiliary Lanes

Approximately 1,400’ Before Chanticleer Pedestrian Overcrossing Looking Northbound

Rodeo Gulch Area Looking Northbound
Chanticleer Ped/Bridge
Environmental Status

Tier I and Tier II Draft EIR/EA Status

• One Tier I & Tier II Draft EIR/EA document
  ➢ Purpose and Need/Project Description Chapter in review by RTC
  ➢ Administrative Draft Tier I and Tier II EIR/EA to be submitted to Caltrans in June

• 15 of 17 technical reports reviewed and approved by Caltrans
Key Milestones

- Preliminary Eng Corridor: October 2011
- Technical Reports: May 2013
- Admin Draft ED to Caltrans: June 2013
  - Draft ED to FHWA: September 2013
  - Public Circulation: January 2014
  - Select Preferred Alternative: Summer 2014
  - Final EA / EIR to FHWA: Winter 2015
  - FHWA Approval: Spring 2015
Highway 1 HOV Lanes

Questions and Answers
### Acronyms

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<tr>
<td>APE</td>
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NEXT STEPS

- May 2013 - AMBAG, with participation from the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, will provide a series of workshops throughout the tri-county region in mid-May 2013 to solicit input from the public on the initial scenarios. There will be two workshops in Santa Cruz County: Monday, May 20 in Watsonville at 275 Main Street, 4th floor 6:00–7:30 pm and Thursday, May 23 in Santa Cruz at the Santa Cruz Police Department Community Room, 155 Center Street, 6:00–7:30 pm. The workshop in Santa Cruz County will be held in Aptos at 6 pm on May 20, 2013 at the Santa Cruz Community Foundation, 7807 Sequel Dr., Aptos.

- June 26, 2013 RTC Transportation Policy Workshop - AMBAG and RTC staff will present the initial scenarios and a qualitative analysis of how the various scenarios compare in advancing the performance measures of the RTP and MTP.

- June/July 2013 - From the initial SCS scenarios, two hybrid SCS scenarios will be developed for further refinement and analysis as part of the process of developing a final preferred scenario.

- August 2013 - RTC staff will present the hybrid scenarios and preferred scenarios to the RTC.

- September 2013 - AMBAG will approve a final preferred scenario which will determine the transportation projects on the "constrained" list that will be evaluated in the program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and included in the RTP.

- February 2014 - The draft RTP, MTP and EIR will be available for public review.

- June 2014 - Final RTP approved by the RTC and SCS/MTP approved by AMBAG.

SUMMARY

RTC staff is engaged in a scenario planning process to determine the projects that will be on the "constrained" (within projected revenues/higher priority) project list in the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan and 2014 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Staff recommends that the RTC provide input on the transportation project types that will be considered under each scenario as part of the scenario planning process for the 2014 Transportation Plans (Attachment 1).

Attachments:
1. Transportation Investment Scenarios

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Scenario #3: Roadway Enhancement Transportation Focus

Land Use Description: North 101 Corridor Focused Growth - Growth in Santa Cruz County would be focused in existing unincorporated communities.

Transportation Description: Transportation investments would focus on reducing travel times and congestion by improving transportation facilities that typically serve longer trips including:

- Local Street & Roads (e.g. multimodal intersection improvements)
- Highway (e.g. Hwy 1 Auxiliary lanes, interchanges, ramp metering)
- Rail Freight Service (e.g. upgrade rail line)
- Transportation System Management (e.g. signal synchronization, park & ride for carpool/vanpool)
- Transportation Demand Management (e.g. 511 traveler information, rideshare, employer individualized marketing)
- Highway safety projects

Scenario #4: Salinas Valley - South 101 Highway - Transportation for Underserved Populations Focus

Land Use Description: South 101 Corridor Focused Growth - There would be limited growth in urban areas of Santa Cruz County. Social Equity/Economic Development - Growth will be concentrated in cities that support agricultural and service workers.

Transportation Description: Transportation investments would focus on increasing capacity or improving operations on Highways in underserved areas through investments in highway infrastructure and regional transit services including:

- Regional Bus Service (e.g. expanded Hwy 1 and 17 Express service)
- Highway (e.g. Highway 1 HOV lanes, includes auxiliary lanes and ramp metering)
- Transportation Demand Management (e.g. programs that encourage transit use)
- Transportation System Management (e.g. transit signal priority)
- Park and Ride and carpool/vanpool programs

Transportation Focus: Not Applicable to Santa Cruz County

Scenario #5: Transportation System Preservation Focus

Land Use Description: Baseline - Growth in Santa Cruz County would be limited to what is already identified in the AMBAG 2035 Regional Growth Forecast, allocated according to existing general plan designations for each jurisdiction.
Transportation Description: Transportation investments would focus on improving the condition of existing roadways, reducing the number of roadways in disrepair and maintaining transit facilities including:

- Local Street and Road Maintenance
- Transit Maintenance

Scenario #6: Highway Improvements Transportation Focus

[Note: This scenario is not currently being proposed by AMBAG but will be considered as part of the RTC-STAR analysis.]

Land Use Description: Growth in Santa Cruz County would be focused along Highway 1.

Transportation Description: Transportation investments would focus on increasing capacity or improving operations on Highway 1 through investments in highway infrastructure and regional transit services including:

- Regional Bus Service (e.g. expanded Hwy 1 and 17 Express service)
- Highway (e.g. Highway 1 HOV lanes, includes auxiliary lanes and ramp metering)
- Transportation Demand Management (e.g. programs that encourage transit use)
- Transportation System Management (e.g. transit signal priority)
- Park-and-Ride and carpool/vanpool programs

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