TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: George Dondero, Executive Director
RE: Director's Report

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line

Bids for the railroad bridge rehabilitation project are due on August 9th. There has been significant interest in the project by a variety of potential bidders. Staff and the construction management team are cautiously optimistic that more and better bids will be received this time and that they will be closer to the engineer's estimate.

The fact that the rail line will not be available for use north of La Selva Beach while work is being done on the La Selva Beach trestle, as previously envisioned, and the fact that it has taken longer than anticipated to start the bridge work has made it challenging for SC&MB Railway to develop operating plans for additional service and generate revenue. However, Santa Cruz & Monterey Bay (SC&MB) Railway is exploring the possibility of operating Train to Christmas Town out of Watsonville in 2013. If it seems that the operation can work, SC&MB Railway will produce an operating plan and submit it to the Regional Transportation Commission for consideration.

RTC staff has been working with local jurisdictions and SC&MB Railway to address a number of clean up and maintenance items on the rail line. These include garbage clean up, vegetation control, graffiti, missing ties on the San Lorenzo River bridge and the at-grade crossing at Mar Vista Drive.

RTC staff and SC&MB Railway are working with local jurisdictions on several projects that affect the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. These include crossings in Aptos Village, the Murray Street Bridge seismic retrofit, the Beach Street roundabout and the Neary Lagoon storm drainage improvement.

Staff has been gathering information from other agencies that own rail lines and working with the Santa Cruz County Real Property Division to develop policies for the RTC’s management of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. However, agencies similar to RTC who own rail line right-of-way do not tend to develop formal policies and address issues as they come up. Therefore, it is requiring more work than originally anticipated to develop those policies. Staff plans to take draft policies to the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee for review before presenting them to the RTC.
SC&MB Railway General Manager Jeff Weeks informs us that the missing ties on the San Lorenzo River bridge have been covered with plywood and that something will be done to improve the Mar Vista Drive grade crossing by August 15th.

In early June staff submitted a proposal for a federal TIGER (Transportation Investment to Generate Economic Recovery) grant to rehabilitate the branch line. A total of $16 M was requested. Grants have not been awarded yet, but we’ve been notified that both Senators Boxer and Feinstein have written letters of support to Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx. Announcement of grant awards is expected sometime this fall.

**Reporting Pedestrian Hazards**

The Pedestrian Safety Work Group, a subcommittee of the RTC’s Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee, partnered with the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District on public outreach to improve local sidewalks and remove barriers to transit. These posters – in English and Spanish -- are now displayed inside Metro’s buses and ParaCruz vehicles and encourage riders to report pedestrian and bicycle hazards via the interactive Hazard Report on the RTC website:

[**sccrtc.org/hazardreport**](http://sccrtc.org/hazardreport)

Reports are forwarded to local jurisdictions for appropriate follow up, which may include their own actions or notification to the responsible party.
Monterey Bay Metropolitan Transportation Plan
Sustainable Communities Strategy
Priorities and Preferences Survey

Executive Summary of Findings
Prepared for Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
August 1, 2013

Project Purpose

- Assist with development of Monterey Bay Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Regional Transportation Plans (RTP).

- Three-county survey of voters
  - Developed by AMBAG and the three local transportation agencies (TAMC, RTC, and SBCOG)

- One of many public engagement tools being used
Project Purpose (cont.)

- Explores attitudes about transportation projects and transportation behaviors, and sustainable communities strategies

- **Not** designed to develop or prepare for a sales tax measure or to decide funding priorities.

Methodology

- Telephone survey of registered voters in Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito Counties
- Conducted May 28 to June 6, 2013
- Interviews conducted by trained, professional interviewers in English and Spanish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Margin of Error</th>
<th>Weighted %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>1201</td>
<td>±2.8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>±4.6</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monterey</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>±4.6</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Benito</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>±5.7</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with any opinion research, the release of selected figures from this report without the analysis that explains their meaning would be damaging to EMC. Therefore, EMC reserves the right to correct any misleading release of this data in any medium through the release of correct data or analysis.

Please note that due to rounding, percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Where applicable, results are compared to previous surveys:

- Sep 30-Oct 2, 2007; n=602
- Feb 10-12, 2004; n=500
Survey respondents are representative of voters geographically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Voters</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz Area</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-County</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV/SLV</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watsonville Area</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Findings

- Words matter; concepts phrased differently yielded different results.

- Farmland and open space/habitat protection are important.

- Voters agree that long-term planning should be aimed at reduction in car usage, but that cars and road improvements are necessary to support the population and the economy.
Key Findings

- Over 55% of commuters drive less than 10 miles for regularly occurring trips (school, job, volunteer).

- Car usage could be reduced through improvements such as enhancing walkability in neighborhoods.

- Transportation is not a top-of-mind concern for Santa Cruz County voters at this time.
Top-of-mind concern about crime has increased considerably

What is the most important problem facing Santa Cruz County today? (Open-end—Top responses shown)
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ONLY

- Crime/Gangs: 2013 - 5%, 2007 - 28%
- Economy/Unemployment: 2013 - 4%, 2007 - 11%
- Roads/Highways/Traffic: 2013 - 10%, 2007 - 19%
- Homelessness: 2013 - 6%, 2007 - 9%
- Water shortage: 2013 - 4%, 2007 - 6%
- Education: 2013 - 5%, 2007 - 7%
- Affordable housing/Cost of living: 2013 - 3%, 2007 - 15%

Education is the top priority, followed by the economy and environmental protection

For each of the following items, please tell me how high a priority that item should be for Santa Cruz County. Use a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 means the lowest priority and 9 means the highest priority.
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- Improving public education: 9-Highest priority - 50%, 8 - 15%, 7 - 11%, 6 - 6%, 5/Don’t know - 10%, Low priority (1-4) - 8%
- Improving job creation & the economy: 9-Highest priority - 42%, 8 - 16%, 7 - 18%, 6 - 10%, 5/Don’t know - 9%, Low priority (1-4) - 5%
- Protecting the environment: 9-Highest priority - 41%, 8 - 16%, 7 - 15%, 6 - 8%, 5/Don’t know - 11%, Low priority (1-4) - 9%
- Improving safety on local roads & highways: 9-Highest priority - 32%, 8 - 12%, 7 - 15%, 6 - 11%, 5/Don’t know - 17%, Low priority (1-4) - 14%
- Reducing traffic congestion on local roads & highways: 9-Highest priority - 31%, 8 - 14%, 7 - 18%, 6 - 8%, 5/Don’t know - 16%, Low priority (1-4) - 12%
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions: 9-Highest priority - 28%, 8 - 11%, 7 - 16%, 6 - 9%, 5/Don’t know - 14%, Low priority (1-4) - 22%
- Increasing affordable housing options: 9-Highest priority - 22%, 8 - 11%, 7 - 16%, 6 - 10%, 5/Don’t know - 17%, Low priority (1-4) - 24%
- Improving local public transit: 9-Highest priority - 15%, 8 - 14%, 7 - 19%, 6 - 11%, 5/Don’t know - 21%, Low priority (1-4) - 21%
While reducing traffic congestion remains a high transportation priority, the importance of road and highway safety has increased.

For each of the following items, please tell me how high a priority that item should be for Santa Cruz County. Use a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 means the lowest priority and 9 means the highest priority. (Mean Response)

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- **Reducing traffic congestion on local roads and highways**
  - 2013: 6.90
  - 2007: 7.11
  - 2004: 6.90

- **Improving safety on local roads and highways**
  - 2013: 6.79
  - 2007: 6.55
  - 2004: 6.03

- **Improving local public transit**
  - 2013: 6.15
  - 2007: 6.24
  - 2004: 5.86

Support for SB 375 Principles
Need to accommodate cars, but also need long-term planning that reduces GHG emissions and car use

For each of the following statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.

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- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- (Don’t know)
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

We must accept that people need their cars to get around and should have long-term planning in our area that accommodates drivers.

- 50% strongly agree
- 35% somewhat agree
- 10% somewhat disagree
- 5% strongly disagree

Improving the roads and highways in our area is necessary to support our economy.

- 48% strongly agree
- 37% somewhat agree
- 10% somewhat disagree
- 5% strongly disagree

It is necessary for the future of our economy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- 48% strongly agree
- 31% somewhat agree
- 8% somewhat disagree
- 3% strongly disagree

We must accept that climate change is a problem and should have long-term planning in our area that will result in people using cars less.

- 51% strongly agree
- 28% somewhat agree
- 7% somewhat disagree
- 4% strongly disagree

Voters would like to reduce reliance on cars

For each of the following statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ONLY

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- (Don’t know)
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

It is necessary for the health of our community to reduce our reliance on cars.

- 37% strongly agree
- 34% somewhat agree
- 15% somewhat disagree
- 4% strongly disagree

Fixing potholes and maintaining roads should be our highest transportation priority, even if it means putting off other transportation projects and improvements.

- 27% strongly agree
- 39% somewhat agree
- 24% somewhat disagree
- 1% strongly disagree

We need to drastically reduce our reliance on cars in our area, even if doing so is difficult for us today.

- 28% strongly agree
- 34% somewhat agree
- 17% somewhat disagree
- 1% strongly disagree
One-third of voters say they would drive a lot less if gas were significantly more expensive, and many others would drive less with other changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Drive a lot less</th>
<th>Drive a little less</th>
<th>No difference/(Don't know)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If gas cost more than six dollars per gallon</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there were more stores and services near your home</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If traffic gets worse</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there was better public transit</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you had to pay for parking, or if it cost more</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Incremental shifts separately and combined—can reduce driving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Drive a lot less</th>
<th>Drive a little less</th>
<th>No difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If there were more bike lanes</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there were safe places to store your bicycle</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there was less expensive housing that you liked near your job</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there were more sidewalks</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If your work hours were more flexible</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Farmland and open space preservation are important; there is also strong support for making walking easier and safer

Now I'm going to read you a list of possible transportation projects in your area. For each of the following projects, please tell me whether you support or oppose the project, using a scale of one to nine where one means strongly oppose and nine means strongly support.

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ONLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>9-Support</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Total support (7-9)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preserving farmland and agriculture</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserving open space and wildlife habitat</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making it easier and safer for people to walk to schools, stores, jobs, and other places</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing new transportation spending and improvements in places where the most people will use them</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving transportation for seniors and people with disabilities</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving roads to make driving safer</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support is high for maintenance and maximizing use of the existing system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>9 - Strongly Support</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Total Support (7-9):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining roads and repairing potholes</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding opportunities for carpooling and vanpooling</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving highways to reduce traffic and travel times</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making improvements to the Highway 1 corridor to reduce spill over traffic on local roads and in neighborhoods</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding merge lanes between on and off ramps on Highway 1 to allow traffic to flow more smoothly and safely</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding and improving bike lanes and bike paths</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All projects have some strong supporters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>9 - Strongly Support</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Total Support (7-9):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding cuts to existing bus service</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding and improving bus service</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a walking and bicycling trail along the coast and rail line</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing housing near jobs and services to have neighborhoods where less driving is needed</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building bicycle and pedestrian bridges over Highway 1</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding commuter train service</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing local passenger rail service between Watsonville and Santa Cruz</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Travel Behaviors

Seven in ten voting commuters in the county drive alone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Drive alone</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz City</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Clara County</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-county</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watsonville Area</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotts Valley/SLV</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monterey County</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Benito County</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

72% of voters in the county commute at least three times a week. Of those...
The majority of Santa Cruz County commuters travel 10 miles or less

**How many miles is your one-way trip? On average, does your one way trip take less than an hour, or an hour or more? (If less than an hour) How many minutes is your one-way trip? (If an hour or more) How long in hours and minutes is your one-way trip?**

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ONLY**

Average distance: 16 miles  
Average time: 31 minutes

Most commuters either stay in Santa Cruz Area or drive towards that area

**72% of voters in the county commute at least three times a week. Of those...**
People use multiple modes to get around, more than half walk at least occasionally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Not at all/(Don't know)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walk for transportation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommute, or work from home</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpool or vanpool</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ride a bicycle for transportation</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take public transit</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions for RTP/MTP/SCS

- While most acknowledge that cars continue to be necessary, there is support for long-term planning that can get people out of their cars.

- Three-quarters of respondents say that they sometimes walk, bicycle, or take transit to get places, providing an opportunity to expand these uses.

- Large numbers of recurring trips are five miles or less, prime trips for non-vehicle uses.

- Voters strongly support preservation of both farmland and open space, implying support for compact communities.

- There are opportunities for incremental behavioral shifts towards driving less, especially by improving public transit and the walkability of neighborhoods.