

AGENDA: November 5, 2015

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

THIS ITEM FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Active Transportation Program Grants Awarded

On October 21, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) selected 114 biking and walking projects statewide to receive \$215 million in state and federal funds through the state's 2015 Active Transportation Program. The program of projects included \$4.2 million for four projects in Santa Cruz County:

- MBSST - Rail Trail from Watsonville Slough Trailhead to Walker street (Watsonville): \$688,000
- Countywide Bicycle Route Signage Project (SCCRTC): \$320,000
- Branciforte Creek Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge(Santa Cruz): \$1,800,000
- Citywide Safe Routes to School Crossing Improvement Program (Santa Cruz): \$1,404,000

Public Works Director Makes an Impact

Recently Mark Dettle, Public Works Director for the City of Santa Cruz triggered some action to stimulate the legislature to come up with reliable funding to address the poor road conditions in California. After completing a 15-state, 5,000 mile cross country road trip from Boston to Santa Cruz with his daughter, Mark shared some observations with Gary Richards, author of the regular column "Mr. Roadshow" in the San Jose Mercury News. In part, Mark says, *"The worst road conditions were in California. We also have the roads with the most litter and trash in the medians ---- pretty embarrassing. Texas, South and North Carolina, Tennessee and Connecticut had the best road conditions. It was a great trip, but it is clear California needs to find a way to reinvest in our roads. We have the highest gas prices and the poorest road conditions."* Mark's published comments inspired a one-minute radio commercial generated by the California Alliance for Jobs, with voicing by comedian Will Durst. You can listen to it here: <http://www.rebuildca.org> [Will Durst radio spot](#)

More Traffic Cameras on Highway 1

New cameras have been added to the Caltrans traffic monitoring system, and each one can be viewed on the RTC's Cruz511 website. Seven new locations with cameras include:

- Soquel Ave
- 41st Ave southbound onramp (currently offline)
- Bay/Porter
- Between Park and Bay
- Park Avenue
- Rio Del Mar Blvd
- Freedom Blvd

Federal Transportation Act

The House and the Senate cleared and the President signed legislation last week to extend Highway Trust Fund spending authority for three more weeks (through November 20) while activity to secure a long-term reauthorization continues. The measure also included a three-year extension of the December 2015 deadline for railroads to install safety technology known as Positive Train Control (PTC). The most recent short-term extension of the current MAP-21 law governing highway and transit programs was scheduled to expire on October 29. The three-week extension is designed to keep Congress' feet to the fire on a long-term measure. The Senate approved a six-year reauthorization (the DRIVE Act) this summer; the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee approved its own six-year bill in mid-October that has many similarities to the DRIVE Act. This week the House is working its way through hundreds of amendments to a \$325 billion highway bill. The House hopes to complete its work this week and to set up a potential House-Senate conference committee to reconcile differences in the measures before November 20.

Funding continues to be a problem for the transportation reauthorization. While touting their measures as six-year bills, both the House and Senate anticipate securing only three-years of funding for the efforts. Since virtually all parties involved have taken an increase in the federal gasoline tax off the table as a funding source, tax-writing committees with jurisdiction over the Highway Trust Fund have cobbled together a hodgepodge of unrelated revenue-raisers that would provide only minimal increases (2% annually) for revenue-starved highway and transit programs.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Funding

As reported at past meetings, Caltrans and the California Transportation Commission (CTC) have determined that over \$150 million (or about 25%) of projects programmed to receive State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds in FY15/16 will need to be delayed, with the funding shortage even worse in future years. The shortfall is primarily the result of a decrease in the state gas tax. RTC staff has been working with local project sponsors to

evaluate their schedules for projects previously programmed for STIP funds, in order to assist with development of the CTC's "allocation plan" for FY15/16 and 2016 STIP. Staff will present recommendations at the December 2015 RTC meeting that focus on preventing projects from being delayed unnecessarily due to the state funding shortfalls. Notably, local jurisdictions are also anticipating a significant drop in gas tax revenues this year; making the work to raise new local revenues and to shift from the gas tax to a more stable state funding source even more critical.

California Road Charge Pilot Program

Because the state gas tax is not able to generate enough money operate and maintain the existing transportation system, the State of California is working to design and implement a statewide pilot program to study a road charge model as an alternative to the gas tax. Several RTC staff attended an evening presentation on the pilot program on October 29 at the Museum of Art and History. It was sponsored by the local chapter of WTS (Women's Transportation Seminar). Road charging means drivers pay to help maintain the roads based on the distance they travel or a period of time they use the roads, rather than the amount of gasoline they consume. Volunteers are needed to participate in the pilot program: http://www.dot.ca.gov/road_charge/.

Rail Trail and Corridor News

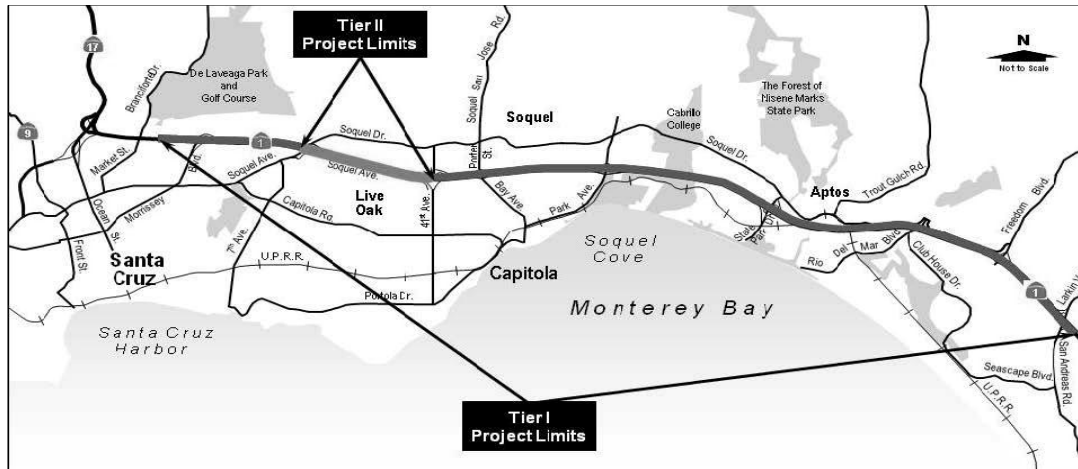
The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is hosting a Rail Trail presentation at the Hotel Paradox on December 8th at 7pm. Titled "*All About Your Local Rail Trail*," the event will include presentations by the Land Trust, Bike Santa Cruz County, and our own Cory Caletti. You can sign up to attend at the Land Trust's website: www.LandTrustSantaCruz.org. The space holds 350 people and they expect to fill it, so interested parties are advised to sign up in advance.

RTC staff provided assistance on October 24th at a rail corridor clean-up effort. The clean-up was hosted by Friends of the Rail and Trail (FORT) in collaboration with the RTC and Santa Cruz Volunteer Center for the 2015 Make a Difference Day. The focus area was the Westside of Santa Cruz between California Street and Fair Avenue. RTC staff and 15 volunteers collected 275 lbs. of trash, plastic/glass recyclables and other metal or large plastic items.

November 19 TPW

All Commissioners are strongly encouraged to attend the November 19 Transportation Policy Workshop meeting. The RTC will continue discussion of a proposed Expenditure Plan designed to guide investments to be funded by a proposed ½-cent sales tax measure that would go to the voters a year from now.

**Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for
PROPOSED PROJECTS ON HIGHWAY 1 in Santa Cruz County (Tier I and Tier II)**



OPEN FORUM HEARING

Date and Time: Thursday, **December 3, 6:00 to 8:30 pm**

Place: **Live Oak Elementary School, 1916 Capitola Rd @ 17th Ave, Live Oak**

WHAT IS BEING CONSIDERED?

Caltrans, in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC), analyzed the following proposals:

- **Tier I** – Corridor (program level) analysis of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes and Transportation System Management alternatives from Morrissy Blvd to Larkin Valley Rd
- **Tier II** – Build (project level) analysis of Auxiliary Lanes between 41st Ave and Soquel Dr including a pedestrian-bicycle overcrossing at Chanticleer Ave

WHY THIS PUBLIC NOTICE?

Caltrans studied the effects this project may have on the environment. A Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (DEIR/EA) has been prepared to communicate the project’s potential impacts and the potential for incorporating avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures. The Tier 1 alternatives may result in: potential impacts to wetlands, noise, traffic operations, right of way, and visual aesthetics. The Tier II alternative would result in: impacts to visual aesthetics, traffic operations, and utility relocations; and improvements to traffic operation, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, and transit.

WHAT’S AVAILABLE?

The Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and technical studies are available for review online at: sccrtc.org/hwy1eir . Copies of the DEIR/EA and technical studies are also available for review at the Regional Transportation Commission Office (1523 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz), weekdays from 8 am to 5 pm, at the Caltrans District Office (50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo), weekdays from 8 am to 4 pm, and at the following libraries: Downtown Santa Cruz, Live Oak, Capitola, Aptos, Watsonville.

WHERE DO YOU COME IN?

Review the DEIR/EA and submit your comments to the address below. Your comments will be part of the public record. An Open Forum Hearing will be held on December 3 (see above) with engineering and environmental staff available to answer questions about the proposals and the DEIR/EA. Oral comments may be provided to the court reporter at the meeting or submitted in writing.

CONTACT

Comments on the DEIR/EA must be received by January 18, 2016.

Send Comments to: Matt Fowler, Senior Environmental Planner
Caltrans – District 5
50 Higuera St, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
OR via email to Matt.C.Fowler@dot.ca.gov

ACCOMMODATIONS

Individuals who require special accommodation are requested to contact the Regional Transportation Commission at (831) 460-3200 at least 7 days prior to the scheduled meeting date.

ESPAÑOL: Traductor al español estará disponible en la junta.



Notice of Availability and Open Forum Hearing (Dec 3)

**Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment
for Proposed Projects on Highway 1 (Tier I and Tier II)**

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
www.sccrtc.org/hwy1eir



Highway 1 environmental document, including technical studies, availability:

- Online: sccrtc.org/hwy1eir
- RTC office: 1523 Pacific Ave, Santa Cruz
- Caltrans office: 50 Higuera St, San Luis Obispo
- Local libraries: Downtown Santa Cruz, Live Oak, Capitola, Aptos, Watsonville

Stay connected! Find out more about the Highway 1 environmental analysis:

- RTC Website: sccrtc.org/hwy1
- Caltrans Website: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist05/projects/>
- eNews: sign up for emailed project info (sccrtc.org/enews)
- Facebook: facebook.com/sccrtc
- Twitter: [@santacruzrtc](https://twitter.com/santacruzrtc)
- NextDoor: nextdoor.com