



Stuck in Traffic—Will More Lanes Help?

Saturday, May 14th, 10:30am-noon
Louden Nelson Center, 301 Center St., Santa Cruz

with **Susan Handy, Ph.D.**, Director of the National Center for Sustainable Transportation at UC Davis.
Commissioned by the California Air Resources Board to study the impacts of increasing highway capacity on relieving traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.



Transportation Justice

Voters Will Decide Transportation Priorities Affecting

- Mobility
- Cost of Living
- Environment

Thursday, May 26th, 7-8:30pm
First United Methodist Church, 229 Stanford St., Watsonville

with **Chris Lepe**, Silicon Valley Senior Community Planner for California's leading transportation advocacy organization, TransForm. A graduate of UC Santa Cruz in Environmental Studies and Latin American/Latino Studies, Chris received a Masters in Urban Planning at San Jose State University.



Background

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is drafting a transportation sales tax for the November, 2016 ballot. The current draft of the measure proposes \$100 million to widen Highway 1. The Caltrans Environmental Impact Report says the widening will not prevent the highway from "severe breakdown by year 2035".

Meanwhile Metro bus service is being cut due to reduced revenues and higher costs.

This 30-year sales tax measure could be a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fund alternatives to auto dependency.

These events are for people who are interested in the measure's effectiveness, and its social and environmental consequences.

Sponsoring Organizations:

Campaign for Sensible Transportation

<http://sensibletransportation.org>

There Are Sensible Solutions to Traffic

Transit on the rail corridor

The Rail Transit Feasibility Study estimates 6,800 trips per day on the rail corridor, with a 36-minute travel time from Watsonville to Santa Cruz. Electric rail vehicles can be quiet and non-polluting.

(SOURCE: <http://sctrctc.org/projects/rail/> passenger-rail)



Improve Metro

Running express buses on the shoulder of Highway 1 should be studied. "Bus-on-Shoulder" has been successfully implemented in the Twin Cities, Cleveland, Miami, Ottawa, San Diego and Atlanta. More frequent and convenient bus connections will offer an alternative to automobile dependency.



Safer routes for bikes and pedestrians

A majority of trips during commute hours are less than 3 miles. A greater portion of these trips could be made by bicycle and walking if routes are made safe and convenient. Full funding of the Watsonville-Davenport multi-use trail (Rail-Trail) is a top priority.



Highway Widening Doesn't Work

The Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is drafting a half-cent sales tax for transportation for the November, 2016 ballot. Included in the current draft is \$102 million to widen Highway 1 for auxiliary lanes between Soquel Avenue and State Park Drive.

We are urging the RTC to eliminate highway widening from the sales tax draft before it is finalized in July 2016. Here's why:

The Caltrans Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on Highway 1 widening indicates that congestion relief as a result of auxiliary lanes will be negligible:

ITS (UC) DAVIS
INSTITUTE OF TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

"Adding capacity to roadways fails to alleviate congestion for long."

"Increasing Highway Capacity Unlikely to Relieve Traffic Congestion" (2015)
—Susan Handy, PhD

- The project "would result in a very slight improvement in traffic congestion when compared to the No Build Alternative."
- The EIR projects that a wider Highway 1 will fill up with even more traffic, resulting in a state of "severe breakdown by year 2035."
- The EIR projects more traffic—and a 25% increase in greenhouse gas emissions—if the project is built.

The public supports commuter alternatives, not highway widening. Recent polling shows 72% support for reducing congestion on Highway 1. However, only 46% support actually widening the highway. (SOURCE: Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Assoc., May 2015 RTC meeting.)

We need a tax measure to support effective and sustainable transportation options. (See other side.)

What Can We Do?

Join the Campaign for Sensible Transportation's advocacy for a sales tax measure we can support. Sign the petition at sensibletransportation.org and/or write to the Regional Transportation Commission (info@sctrctc.org).



Campaign for Sensible Transportation
sensibletransportation.org

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Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission

April 7, 2016

Dear Commissioners,

Today the staff reports that it has authorized the expenditure of an additional \$250,000 to update the Environmental Impact Report on Highway 1. This expenditure would be unwise at this time.

If the Commission had the chance to review the public comments on the Draft EIR, Commissioners might conclude that the Draft is deeply flawed. For example, the comment from the law firm, Wittwer and Parkin, representing the Campaign for Sensible Transportation, says,

“The Draft EIR violates the California Environmental Quality Act, because it does not consider other multi-modal transportation options to reduce congestion, such as the Regional Transportation Commission’s intended use of the Santa Cruz Branch Line for rail transit and bike lanes...

The fact that other transportation options are available, and the fact that the RTC is seeking funding to implement some of those options, requires the DEIR to examine rail as an alternative to the Tier I and Tier II projects.”

This suggests to me that the EIR will be fatally flawed if it is not revised to include a consideration of more alternatives than widening the highway or the No Build Alternative. To spend more money on the EIR without understanding what needs to be done to correct its deficiencies could easily be a waste of taxpayer money.

I don’t know of another way for the RTC to understand the deficiencies in the Draft EIR other than to consider them during time on a meeting agenda devoted to that purpose.

Thank you,

