



## Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission 2011 State Legislative Program

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### FOCUS AREAS FOR 2011:

1. **Funding Priority Projects:** Seek and preserve funding for priority transportation projects and programs in Santa Cruz County, including:
  - Highway 1 Soquel-Morrissey Auxiliary Lanes
  - Highway 1 HOV Lanes
  - Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line
  - Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District projects
  - Local Street and Roadway Preservation
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian facilities
2. **Expand revenue-raising opportunities** and innovative financing options beyond the traditional gas tax.
  - **Sponsor legislation** to authorize Service Authorities for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE), including the RTC, to increase SAFE vehicle registration fees by \$1 in order to support motorist aid programs.
  - **Sponsor legislation** to expand the authority of the RTC and local jurisdictions to increase taxes and fees for transportation projects, including new vehicle registration fees.
3. **Address Air Quality/Climate Change:**
  - Support legislation to provide funding to reduce green house gas emissions, including funds needed to implement SB375 and AB32.
4. **Protect and Augment Transportation Funding:** Pursue policy and/or legislative changes to restore, preserve and augment funding for all modes of transportation:
  - Support legislation and other efforts to provide stable funding for transit, local streets and roads, and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects – especially in light of potential impacts of Proposition 22 (2010) and Proposition 26 (2010) on the “gas tax swap”. This may include reinstatement of the state sales tax on gasoline (Proposition 42, 2004).
  - Index the gas tax and other revenues to inflation.
  - Seek early allocation of Proposition 1B bonds for projects in Santa Cruz County.
  - Ensure STIP funds are programmed and allocated to regions based on SB 45 formulas and the region’s priorities. Ensure the State Budget allows flexibility to fund transit projects in the STIP.
  - Increase funding for state Safe Routes to Schools, Bicycle Transportation Account and other bicycle and pedestrian programs.
  - Support increased funding for local streets and roads, as highlighted in the statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment.

## ***General Legislative Platform***

### **1. Preserve Existing Transportation Funding and Formulas.**

Preserve and protect against deferral, borrowing or taking of state funding designated for the transportation system. Retain and enhance California's funding formulas based on the increased costs to maintain and address deficiencies to the existing transportation system.

Specifically:

- a)** Support legislation and other efforts to ensure stable funding for transit, local streets and roads, and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects – especially in light of potential impacts of Proposition 22 (2010) and Proposition 26 (2010) on the “gas tax swap”. Could include reinstatement of the per gallon excise tax increase or state sales tax on gasoline (Proposition 42, 2004) dedicated to transportation. *(Focus area for 2011)*
- b)** Support early and timely sale of bonds for transportation, including allocation of Proposition 1B and Proposition 116 bond funds for projects in Santa Cruz County. Support extension of legislative deadlines previously established for bond programs to coincide with the state's bonding ability. *(Focus area for 2011)*
- c)** Oppose proposals to shift transportation funds to non-transportation purposes and the State General Fund.
  - Protect existing highway and transit funds, including Highway Users Tax Revenue (gas tax), sales taxes for transportation, Public Transportation Account (PTA) and “spillover” revenues, against suspension, transfer or expenditure for non-transportation uses.
  - Support legislation that expedites repayment of transportation funds previously diverted to the State General Fund.
- d)** Support State Budget Reform that will bring fiscal discipline and predictability to the state budget.
- e)** Ensure that transportation planning funds are available to agencies throughout the year and are not withheld due to delays in enacting the state budget.
- f)** Support the continuation of state transportation funding programs dedicated to projects such as transit, Safe Routes to Schools, Bicycle Transportation Account, paratransit and Freeway Service Patrol.
- g)** STIP Modernization
  - Ensure State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds are equitably programmed and allocated to regions, based on SB 45 (1998) formulas and regions' priorities, which may include local road rehabilitation and transit projects.
  - Ensure the State Budget and STIP Fund Estimate allow flexibility to fund all modes of projects in the STIP; increase flexibility for funding STIP projects, and allow STIP projects to access GARVEE bonds.
    - Ensure that transit projects remain eligible for regional STIP funds, even if the STIP does not include Public Transit Account funds.

### **2. Support New Transportation Funding.** Support countywide and statewide efforts to raise needed funds to maintain and enhance the transportation system, including:

- a)** Increase and index state gas and fuel taxes and other sources of transportation revenues so that transportation revenues keep pace with inflation/increased cost. Dedicate revenues to transportation projects and programs.
- b)** Support efforts to address and expand revenue-raising opportunities and innovative financing options beyond the traditional gas tax, especially in recognition of the fact that vehicle miles traveled increasingly exceed fuel consumption. *(Focus area for 2011)*

- c) Support the development of a steady stream of new transportation funds dedicated to local road rehabilitation and maintenance, especially for roadways utilized by bicyclists.
- d) Support legislative efforts to expand the authority of the RTC and local jurisdictions to increase taxes and fees for transportation projects, including gas taxes and fees, vehicle registration fees, congestion pricing, and fees relating to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. *(Focus area for 2011)*
  - Seek amendment to SB 83 (2009) to ensure all regional transportation agencies, not just Congestion Management Agencies (CMA), are authorized to seek voter approval to increase vehicle registration fees by up to \$10 to fund transportation programs and projects. *(Focus area for 2011)*
  - Support legislation that would allow the County of Santa Cruz to pursue a sales tax measure for transportation improvements.
- e) Work with local elected officials, local agencies and interest groups to address continuing gaps in funding for local transportation projects and pursue new local funding sources.
- f) Support legislation that lowers the voter threshold for local transportation funding measures, including lowering the voter threshold for local transportation sales tax ballot measures from the 2/3 supermajority to a simple majority, 55% or 60% majority vote.
- g) Work to ensure that state transportation programs provide the maximum amount of revenues for the Santa Cruz County region. If special state funding programs are developed, support funding of projects in Santa Cruz County.
- h) Advocate that any new state revenues created for transportation be locally controlled and include safeguards to prevent diversion to the State General Fund.



### 3. Support Efforts that Improve Government Efficiency and Expedite Project Delivery.

- a) Support organizational reform efforts that streamline and otherwise improve transportation funding, programming or project delivery processes and eliminate unnecessarily and/or duplicative requirements.
- b) Support greater flexibility in contracting methods.
- c) Support initiatives that increase opportunities to trade federal funds for state funds, as currently exists for Santa Cruz County's share of Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds.
- d) Grant preaward spending authority for transit projects, especially those funded by STIP.
- e) Support efforts to streamline Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) for projects on the State Route System in order to lower the overall cost of PID development. Oppose efforts to transfer the State costs of PID development and oversight to local entities that take the lead on highway projects. *(Focus area for 2011)*
- f) Oppose unfunded mandates on local and regional government.

### 4. Air Quality/Climate Change *(Focus area for 2011)*

- a) Support efforts to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled and encourage smart-growth practices, which also preserve the authority and flexibility of local agencies. Ensure that the region's needs are incorporated in emerging climate change and sustainability

programs, legislation, and regulations, including meeting the goals of AB 32 – the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, and SB 375.

- b)** Ensure adequate funding is made available to fulfill the requirements of AB 32 and SB 375, including funds for transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and other projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and resources to prepare plans in compliance with SB 375.

## 5. Specifics

### a) Transit:

- Support efforts to restore, protect, and enhance funding for public transit, especially in light of AB32 goals to reduce greenhouse gases (GHG).
- Support introduction and passage of legislation designed to preserve and enact additional sources of transit operating and capital assistance, including legislation aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Support funding programs that promote transit-oriented development and transit villages. Ensure that state-supported housing projects near transit facilities provide safe and convenient access for disabled persons to transit and are available to all regions.
- Support measures to allow the use of gas taxes for transit capital purposes, including purchase of rolling stock.
- Support development of the Coast Daylight Train and Transportation Agency for Monterey County's CalTrain extension projects.
- Increase flexibility to use state transit funds on both operations and capital expenses.

### b) Transportation for Seniors and People with Disabilities

- Support transportation programs that are beneficial to communities with limited means.
- Increase funding levels for elderly and disabled transportation, including operating and capital funds for ADA paratransit service and vehicles.
- Support continuation of a competitive process, rather than formula distribution, of FTA5310 funds.
- Support funding transportation to dialysis and other medically necessary appointments; support Medicaid funding for transit and paratransit and oppose reductions in Medi-Cal funding for transportation.
- Support funding to ensure universal access, including access for paratransit vehicles within new developments, fully accessible transit stops and safe travel paths (accessible pedestrian facilities, including audible pedestrian signals), especially between senior and/or disabled living areas, medical facilities, educational facilities, employment locations, and bus stops.



### c) Bicycling & Walking

- Support legislative initiatives and modifications to the California Vehicle Code that would improve conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians, including safety and access.
  - Support legislation and local ordinances prohibiting parking in designated bicycle lanes, to allow law enforcement to ticket vehicles parked in bicycle lanes even if specific "no parking" signage is absent.
  - Support measures that would require bicycle and pedestrian facilities as a part of newly constructed roads and streets.

- Support increased funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs, including education and awareness programs, the Bicycle Transportation Account, Safe Routes to Schools, Complete Streets programs, audible pedestrian signals, and programs that educate enforcement personnel regarding best practices.
- Support the inclusion and expansion of bicycle education programs (e.g. helmet laws, how to ride safely, etc.) in public and private schools, including high schools.
- Support Incentive Programs for bicycle and pedestrian commuters. Support efforts to extend the transportation fringe benefits in the state tax code to bicycle and pedestrian commuters.



**d) Transportation Demand Management/Carpooling:**

- Oppose measures to remove existing or restrict future High Occupancy Vehicle lanes.
- Support legislation to provide incentives for both employers and employees, to encourage use of alternatives to driving alone, such as state tax incentives.
- Support efforts to secure new funding for regional rideshare programs.
- Support programs that would provide incentives for students to use transit and support revision of state laws that restrict Community Colleges' ability to implement transportation fees for transit.

**e) SAFE Callbox and Freeway Service Patrol**

- Support proposals to increase state funding of Freeway Service Patrol programs.
- Support increased flexibility for compatible expenditures of SAFE funds.
- Seek authorization to increase SAFE vehicle registration fees by \$1.00 to fund Freeway Service Patrol and other motorist aid programs. *(Focus area for 2011)*

**f) Safety**

- Support legislative initiatives to improve safety for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.
  - Authorize local jurisdictions to reduce speed limits, based on what that jurisdiction determines is most appropriate for their facility.

**6. Coordinate with Local, Regional and State Agencies and Organizations on legislative principles of mutual interest.**

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*Please contact us at 831-460-3200 with any questions about the RTC Legislative Program.*