



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

**STARS (Sustainable Transportation Access
Rating System)**

Fact Sheet

April 2011

STARS, or the Sustainable Transportation Access Rating System, is envisioned to be a voluntary transportation project evaluation tool similar to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for building projects. STARS is still in the development stage with the pilot project application proposed on the Highway 1 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane project.

Local Use of STARS

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is exploring use of STARS to inform the planning and design of the Highway 1 HOV Lane project to:

- Improve access opportunities for people and goods
- Maximize benefit-cost strategies
- Reduce transportation-related climate and energy pollution

The focus of STARS is on *access*, rather than mobility. Access is mode-neutral and assumes that there are multiple ways to meet a community's needs (e.g., compact communities, transit, virtual communications, driving).

Purpose for Using STARS for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project

- Clarify which project elements and potential strategies produce the greatest access, climate and energy, and cost-effective benefits
- Identify which project elements can be improved
- Incorporate elements into the project that better meet the performance goals over the full life cycle
- Help the public to better understand the benefits and costs of project options

Corridor Steering Committee

A diverse and interdisciplinary Corridor Steering Committee has been formed to develop the STARS project study area, problem statement, and goals in consideration to the Highway 1 HOV Lane project. The Committee is comprised of individuals representing business, planning, energy, transit, environmental protection, alternative energy, education, air quality, emergency responders and other community organizations. The Committee, will begin its work in the summer 2011 in consideration of which of the 12 credits developed to date (see back) offer the greatest opportunity to analyze and identify methods to address access needs along the Highway 1 corridor.

STARS Background

STARS is being developed by a non-profit team based in the northwest -- the North American Sustainable Transportation Council -- comprised of transportation professionals, academia, transit, LEED professionals, and local jurisdictions.

For more information: Please visit the RTC web site: www.sccrtc.org or call (831) 460-3200

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission - State Route 1 Approved Credits for Application to the Highway 1 HOV Lanes Project

Program Categories and Credit Descriptions

Integrative Process

- IP 1 **Comprehensive Project Goals & Objectives** - Review the Purpose and Need of the project to ensure an interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach to the addressing the issues and concerns of the community and includes measures of success...

Access

- A 1 **Establish Access Goal** - Evaluate mode options and establish access goals that result in effective, high quality access for a range of trip purposes and needs for residents, employees and visitors.
- A 2 **Evaluate Expanded TDM Strategies** - Evaluate high-impact Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and establish realistically aggressive project TDM goals.
- A 3 **Evaluate Expanded TSM Strategies** - Evaluate high-impact Transportation System Management (TSM) and establish realistically aggressive project TSM goals.
- A 4 **Evaluate Expanded Transportation Options** - Could include opportunities for expansion of existing systems (ex. express bus service) or new options (ex. Bus Rapid Transit) to help achieve access, climate, and energy goals.
- A 6 **Expanded Lanes & Ramps** - Evaluate a range of expanded road infrastructure improvements (lanes, ramps, metering) to help achieve access, climate, and energy goals.

Climate + Energy

- CE 1 **Establish Climate & Energy Goal** - Significantly reduce the project's life cycle greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.
- CE 2 **Vehicle Mile Reduction Goals & Evaluation** - Determine which strategies are most likely to reduce energy use and climate pollution from reducing vehicle mile traveled (VMT).
- CE 3 **Construction Materials & Methods Goals & Evaluation** - Identify the availability and effectiveness of alternative building materials (embodied and transport) and practices that reduce climate pollution and energy use.
- CE 4 **Improved Flow Goal & Evaluation** - Optimize vehicle operating efficiencies using the facility to minimize climate pollution and energy use on the corridor.
- CE 5 **Renewable Energy Goal & Evaluation** - Determine which strategies are most likely to reduce energy use and climate pollution from use of on-site renewable energy.

Benefit/Cost

- BC 1 **Analyze Life Cycle Benefit Cost** - Determine the access-to-cost ratio of the full range of access strategies (recognizing the challenge of including all possible externalities, so that decision makers may make an informed decision).