

# Unified Corridor Investment Study

## Draft Step 1 Analysis – Summary of Public Comments received at Public Workshop and through Online Survey

### October-November 2017

Two public workshops were held and an online survey was created to solicit public input on the Step 1 Analysis. Public workshops were held on October 2 & 3, 2017 in Downtown Watsonville and in Live Oak, respectively. The survey was available online from October 11, 2017 through November 8, 2017. The information presented at these public workshops and in the survey was informed by input provided by the public in prior UCS surveys and public workshops.

**Comments:** Public comments on projects were submitted at both public workshops and the online survey. Public comments on scenarios were submitted at the public workshop only. A summary of public comments are shown below. All public comments submitted at the [workshops](#) and [on the survey](#) are available on the UCS webpage.

#### *Hwy 1: High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes*

Comments stated that more information was needed about the project's impact on congestion and transit. Other comments expressed concern about environmental impacts, the level of public investment required, induced traffic and equity. Comments stated that the project should be combined with a toll lane, three or more individuals should be required to carpool, one general purpose lane should be converted to a carpool lane instead of constructing a new HOV lane, a new HOV lane should be dedicated to commercial vehicles, new general purpose lanes should be constructed. Comments included suggestions to add a lane to Highway 1 designated for commercial traffic only, allowing commercial traffic in HOV lane, designating HOV lane for carpools with 3 or more, and implementing bus rapid transit on Highway 1. Other comments questioned how this project related to Measure D and bicycle and pedestrian overcrossings over Highway 1.

#### *Hwy 1: Auxiliary Lanes (These auxiliary lanes are in addition to auxiliary lanes approved in Measure D)*

Comments included statements that this project would reduce bottle necks, that this project should be combined with additions of through lanes on Highway 1 and/or interchange improvements and that funding should be dedicated to fiber optic network so people didn't have to travel as much. Other comments expressed concern about environmental impacts, induced travel and potential impacts on private property owners nearby.

#### *Hwy 1: Bridge over San Lorenzo River*

Comments received included support for seismic improvements to existing bridge. Other comments raised concerns about environmental impacts with or without the project. Some comments stated that adding additional lanes to the bridge would improve traffic flow and other comments expressed concern that the project would not improve traffic flow. Other comments suggested widening the San Lorenzo River Bridge in the northbound direction only and the need for more investment in the southern portion of Santa Cruz County, and not the northern portion..

#### *Hwy 1: Bus on Shoulder*

Comments requested more information about the impact on congestion and transit travel time. Comments included that this project was a cost-effective solution to traffic problems, that more multi-purpose lanes were needed, and investments should be made to support vehicles not transit. Comments included support for this project if no parking removal or soundwalls were required.

#### *Hwy 1: Rail Transit*

Comments stated that this project was too expensive and too far from housing. Some comments said no rail service should be provided in Santa Cruz County and some comments said rail service should instead be provided. Other comments suggested that personal rapid transit should be considered instead of rail.

#### *Soquel/Freedom: Auto Intersection Improvements*

Comments included that auto intersection improvements should also include improvements for bicycle and pedestrians and/or not negatively impact bicycles and pedestrian travel at intersections. Other intersection improvements suggested in comments include roundabouts, signal synchronization, diagonal crosswalks and widening Soquel from State Park to Rio Del Mar.

#### *Soquel/Freedom: Bicycle and Pedestrian Intersection Improvements*

Comments included a request for more information about bicycle and pedestrian intersection improvements and potential traffic impacts for autos, identified the importance of considering visually impaired individuals when planning intersection improvements, constructing diagonal crosswalks at intersections, removing dedicated right-hand turn lanes to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety. Other comments suggested establishing a bike share program and the need for enforcement and education.

#### *Soquel/Freedom: Buffered Bike Lanes*

Comments included the need for a continuous facility, green lanes and a physical barrier between bicycles and autos as a buffered bike lane. Other comments suggested that bicycles should be located in the Rail ROW, converting sidewalks on Soquel to multi-use paths, and the need for enforcement.

#### *Soquel/Freedom: Dedicated Lane for Bus and Bike*

Comments expressed concerns about co-mingling bike and buses and stated that this project is not a bicycle improvement.

### *Soquel/Freedom: Bus Rapid Transit Lite*

Comments included that this project could make congestion worse, this project is preferred over Bus on Shoulder, that this project was supported if it didn't negatively impact buffered bicycle lanes. Other comments stated that a separate bus lane was needed, that bus pullouts should be required at every bus stop to move buses completely out of auto travel lanes and free buses should be provided to all Santa Cruz County residents

### *Rail Right-of-Way: Passenger Rail*

Comments included a request for future rail transit to include a small, electric vehicle that uses clean fuel technologies and is designed to co-exist with bicycles. Comments included statements in support of rail transit and comments in opposition of rail transit service. Comments included questions about the cost of providing rail service and the demand for rail transit service, including the number and demographic of people who might take rail transit service and if commuters would use rail transit. Comments stated that there was insufficient space for a trail and rail on the rail right-of-way and stated the preference for a wider trail without rail transit. Comments expressed concern about environmental, safety, and neighborhood impacts and potential impacts of rail transit on private property owners. Comments included the need for parking at rail transit stations. Comments asked questions about the cost of fare for rail transit service and fare discounts for seniors and low-income individuals. Comments asked questions about the impact of rail transit service on roadway congestion and the feasibility of rail transit. Comments suggested personal transit rapid as an alternative to rail transit and initially providing rail transit in a smaller area and scaling service as needed. Other comments suggested improvements to Highway 1 instead of improvements to the rail right-of-way.

### *Rail Right-of-Way: Freight Transit Service*

Comments included statements about the energy efficiency of rail freight service and the need for rail freight service during emergencies. Comments expressed concern about the cost of rail freight service, impacts on passenger rail service, noise and demand for rail freight service. Comments asked questions about the impact of rail freight service on roadway congestion, and environmental and economic benefits. Comments included support for freight rail service in Watsonville.

### *Rail Right-of-Way: Bus Rapid Transit*

Comments stated that this project was preferable to rail transit on the rail right-of-way, other comments stated that rail transit was preferable to bus transit on the rail right-of-way, and other comments stated no transit should be provided on the rail right-of-way. Comments included questions and concerns about how this project would co-exist with a bicycle and pedestrian path and potential negative impacts on a bicycle and pedestrian path. Comments included questions about the cost and economic feasibility of this project overall when compared with rail transit service, the cost of fares and fare discounts for seniors and low-income individuals, level of ridership, impacts on Highway 1 congestion and impacts on future rail transit service. Comments suggested that electric buses and automated transit

vehicles be considered and electric bicycles as an alternative to bus transit. Comments expressed concerns about environmental impacts and fuel efficiency. Comments requested providing rail transit and personal rapid transit on the rail right-of-way instead of the bus rapid transit, extending bus rapid transit on the rail right-of-way to Buena Vista Avenue, and limiting service to peak periods. Comments suggested improvements to Highway 1, bus rapid transit on Highway 1 and transit on Highway 17 instead of improvement to the rail right-of-way.

#### *Rail Right-of-Way: Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail*

Comments included support for a bicycle and pedestrian trail without rail on the rail right-of-way, a bicycle and pedestrian trail that shares the rail right-of-way with rail, support for a "greenway", support for a bicycle and pedestrian trail that separates bicycles and pedestrians, opposition to a bicycle and pedestrian trail, and support for a bicycle and pedestrian trail that allows for rail in the future. Comments stated that a bicycle and pedestrian trail would have health and safety benefits and other comments expressed concern that a trail didn't consider social equity. Comments expressed concern about the cost of a trail and instead recommended bicycle improvements on Soquel and Highway 1. Comments stated that bicycle under and overpasses at intersections should be considered, that the trail should be continuous on the rail right-of-way and not divert to local streets, and that the rail right-of-way provides a flat grade for bicycling. Comments stated that this project would increase bicycle commuters while other expressed concern that this project would not increase bicycle commuters and served recreational bicyclists only, and would not reduce congestion on roadways. Comments expressed concern about delaying construction of this project, the need for enforcement on the trail to prevent loitering and theft and suggested constructing bike and pedestrian crossings over Rail ROW. Although this project was soliciting input on a bicycle and pedestrian trail on the rail right-of-way, some comments addressed rail transit on the rail right-of-way. These comments included opposition to rail transit, statements that this project could only supported when combined with rail transit, that rail transit should be on Highway 1 to serve commuters, and that rail transit would encourage development along the rail right-of-way.

#### *Other comments:*

Comments not specific to a project include: a request for more public forums that are more engaging, more analysis for individual projects, analyzing health benefits of projects, a more extensive analysis of environmental impacts and equity, asking residents to vote on a trail only option or rail transit option on the rail ROW and providing time-frames for projects.

#### *Scenario Comments:*

Public workshops participants were offered the opportunity to build their own scenario and recommend changes to Scenarios A-F provided by staff. Below is a list of the comments provided to pursue different scenarios that combine:

- bus rapid transit on Highway 1 with HOV lane project
- train only on the Rail ROW

- Bus on Shoulder on Highway 1 with Bus Rapid Transit on Soquel and Trail Only on the Rail ROW
- trail only and other low-cost options,
- combining Bus on Shoulder and Metering On-Ramps on Highway 1, Bus Rapid Transit Lite, increased frequency of bus service and buffered bike lanes on Soquel/Freedom, and bike and pedestrian trail and rail transit on Rail ROW
- Scenario A and bus rapid transit on Soquel/Freedom
- Scenario B and remove auxiliary lanes
- Scenario C and remove freight service
- self-driving cars in all scenarios and freight in all scenarios

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