AGENDA

Thursday, August 16, 2018
9:00 a.m.

NOTE LOCATION THIS MONTH
Watsonville City Council Chambers
275 Main Street, Suite 450
Watsonville, CA

NOTE
See the last page for details about access for people with disabilities, translation services and meeting broadcasts.

En Español
Para información sobre servicios de traducción al español, dirijase a la última página.

AGENDAS ONLINE
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COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP
Caltrans (ex-officio) Tim Gubbins
City of Capitola Jacques Bertrand
City of Santa Cruz Sandy Brown
City of Scotts Valley Randy Johnson
City of Watsonville Trina Coffman-Gomez
County of Santa Cruz Greg Caput
County of Santa Cruz Ryan Coonerty
County of Santa Cruz Zach Friend
County of Santa Cruz John Leopold
County of Santa Cruz Bruce McPherson
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District Ed Bottorff
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District Cynthia Chase
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District Mike Rotkin

The majority of the Commission constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business.
1. Roll call

2. Oral communications

   Any member of the public may address the Commission on any item within the jurisdiction of the Commission that is not already on the agenda. The Commission will listen to all communication, but in compliance with State law, and may not take action on items that are not on the agenda.

   Speakers are requested to sign the sign-in sheet and state their name clearly so that their names can be accurately recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

3. Additions or deletions to consent and regular agendas

   **CONSENT AGENDA**

   All items appearing on the consent agenda are considered to be minor or non-controversial and will be acted upon in one motion if no member of the RTC or public wishes an item be removed and discussed on the regular agenda. Members of the Commission may raise questions, seek clarification or add directions to consent agenda items without removing the item from the consent agenda as long as no other Commissioner objects to the change.

   No consent agenda items this month

   **REGULAR AGENDA**

4. Innovators in Transportation Speakers Series: The State Rail Plan, Funding, and other Considerations for Rail in the Monterey Bay Area – Guest Speaker: Kyle Gradinger, Acting Division Chief, Caltrans Division of Rail and Mass Transit – Oral report
   
   (George Dondero, Executive Director)

   a. Speaker presentation

5. **Highway 1 Bus on Shoulder Feasibility Study and Implementation**

   (Sarah Christensen, Senior Transportation Engineer)

   a. Staff report
   b. Presentation from consultant

6. Review items to be discussed in closed session

   **CLOSED SESSION**

7. CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS pursuant to Government Code 54957.6

   Commission Negotiators: Lozano Smith and Yesenia Parra
   Bargaining Units: RTC Association of Middle Management (RAMM) and Community of RTC Employees (CORE)
OPEN SESSION

8. Report on closed session

9. Next meetings

The next RTC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 6, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the County Board of Supervisor Chambers, 701 Ocean Street, 5th Floor, Santa Cruz, CA.

The next TPW meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 20, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the City of Santa Cruz Council Chambers, Santa Cruz, CA.

HOW TO REACH US

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COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Written comments for items on this agenda that are received at the RTC office in Santa Cruz by noon on the day before this meeting will be distributed to Commissioners at the meeting.

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AGENDA: August 16, 2018

TO: Regional Transportation Commission

FROM: Sarah Christensen, Senior Transportation Engineer

RE: Highway 1 Bus on Shoulder Feasibility Study and Implementation

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Receive an update on the Highway 1 41st/Soquel Auxiliary Lanes Project and how the potential Bus on Shoulder facility will be integrated into the project.
3. Authorize the Executive Director to enter into negotiations for a Cooperative Agreement with the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) to fund the preparation of the operating concept of the Bus on Shoulder facility on Highway 1 between Soquel Avenue/Drive and 41st Avenue Interchanges.

BACKGROUND

Highway 1, in both Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, is heavily congested during the morning and afternoon peak periods. During congested times, travel speeds are diminished, significant delay results, and long queues form behind breakdown points. Bus operations along the congested portions of Highway 1 pose a significant challenge for Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) and Santa Cruz METRO to keep public transit competitive with the single occupant vehicle in the same traffic conditions. In order to address this problem, transit agencies in other states and California in collaboration with their Department of Transportation partners, have implemented bus-on-shoulder (BOS) operations during peak congestion periods.

In order to help solve the congestion problem, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to increase ridership, public transit must offer an advantage over driving alone especially along corridors with heavy traffic. Several years ago, MST approached Caltrans about the possibility of studying bus operations on Highway 1 shoulders. Assembly Bill 946 (Assembly Member Mark Stone) was passed in 2013 allowing Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties the ability to operate buses on shoulders. The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) awarded the majority of the funding necessary to move forward with a feasibility study.

In October of 2016, MST, as contract manager, hired CDM Smith to conduct a Feasibility Study to evaluate the possibility of operating buses on highway shoulders in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. This study was prepared in cooperation with Caltrans, CHP, TAMC, MST, RTC, METRO and local jurisdictions.
The full Feasibility Study can be found on the METRO website: Monterey Bay Area Feasibility Study of Bus on Shoulder Operations on State Route 1 and the Monterey Branch Line.

DISCUSSION

Key Findings of Feasibility Study – Santa Cruz County
The Feasibility Study included data collection, literature review, traffic analysis, transit route performance analysis, concept feasibility, cost-benefit assessment and project implementation/next phase. During the review and study period, the project team sought stakeholder participation from local jurisdictions, Caltrans, California Highway Patrol, AMBAG and TAMC. Some of the key findings of the Feasibility Study for Santa Cruz County are:

- Severe SR 1 morning and afternoon peak period traffic lasts for long periods.
- Congestion and unreliability keeps METRO from using SR 1 more extensively for bus services.
- SR 1 shoulders lack the width and pavement structural section to support bus-on-shoulder operations without significant construction.
- The existing and planned auxiliary lanes provide an opportunity for bus on shoulder operations and should be implemented in coordination with each of the auxiliary lane projects. This approach would be the most effective and operationally superior.
- Project cost estimates were developed for the different options along the project corridor. A summary evaluation for both counties was prepared showing a range of costs. BOS, combined with the auxiliary lanes, shows promise in Santa Cruz County with a cost of $7.9 million.

Next Steps for Bus-on-Shoulder (BOS)
Pending METRO and RTC Board approvals, the intent is to expedite the project approval and environmental clearance of the BOS facility on Highway 1 between 41st Avenue and Soquel Drive as a separate project in an effort to “catch up” with the auxiliary lane project prior to construction. If the project approval and environmental clearance of the BOS project is completed within 6 to 12 months, it may be possible to combine the BOS elements into the construction package for the Highway 1 41st/Soquel Auxiliary Lanes Project, thus reducing construction impacts to the general public.

Pending board approval, METRO will invest up to $50,000 to develop an operating concept for review by Caltrans. The operating concept will be developed by the consultant selected to prepare the final design for the Highway 1 41st/Soquel auxiliary lane project. We expect the conceptual design development process to be an iterative and collaborative process involving METRO, the RTC, and Caltrans. Our proposed implementation plan includes initiation of the conceptual design development in the fall of 2018, with a goal of reaching consensus by January of 2019. Upon Caltrans conceptual approval of the facility, the preparation of the required environmental documentation and Caltrans project approval will follow,
with the BOS design elements being integrated into the Highway 1 41st/Soquel Auxiliary Lanes Project Final Design package.

The RTC, METRO, and Caltrans have had initial conversations about the possibility of a streamlined project delivery approach for the project approval and environmental clearance process which would take between 6 and 12 months to complete, allowing the project to catch up with the start of the construction of the auxiliary lane project in 2020. It is anticipated that a streamlined process can be used for this project due to the BOS improvements being minor in nature and within disturbed interchange areas.

**Highway 1 41st/Soquel Auxiliary Lanes Project update**

At the May 17, 2018 Transportation Policy Workshop the Commission approved the RTC to be the implementing agency for the plans, specifications, and engineer’s estimate (PS&E) phase of the Highway 1 41st/Soquel auxiliary lanes project which includes the Chanticleer Avenue pedestrian/bicycle overcrossing. Since that time, the RTC and Caltrans have been negotiating a Cooperative Agreement for the PS&E phase, which is anticipated to be ready for Commission approval in September.

The procurement of the professional engineering consultant to prepare the plans, specifications, and engineer’s estimate for the project is underway. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was released in June with proposals by professional engineering consultants due on July 30, 2018. Interviews are scheduled for August 13, 2018. Selection and subsequent contract negotiation will occur later this month, with a contract for Commission approval anticipated in September. The development of an operating concept for the BOS facility was included in the RFP Scope of Services as an optional task, allowing this effort to begin upon contract award for the PS&E phase.

The funds contributed to this project by METRO will fund this effort; therefore, **staff recommends that the RTC authorize the Executive Director to enter into negotiations for a Cooperative Agreement with the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) to fund the preparation of the operating concept for the Bus on Shoulder facility on Highway 1 between Soquel Drive and 41st Avenue Interchanges.**

**SUMMARY**

A feasibility study for operating buses on the shoulders of Highway 1 was completed in June of 2018. The conclusions of the feasibility study are that implementing a bus on shoulder facility on Highway 1 is feasible and cost effective if implemented in coordination with the auxiliary lanes projects planned on Highway 1 in Santa Cruz County. The next steps for the bus on shoulder project are to develop an operating concept acceptable to Caltrans, METRO, and the RTC. Pending board approval, METRO has contributed $50,000 to fund this effort. A Cooperative Agreement between the RTC and METRO is needed in order for the RTC consultant to prepare the operating concept.