

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC
2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
Comments received by 12:00 noon on 12/4/19

From: jimc@earthworkspaving.com

Sent: Tuesday, November 26, 2019 5:10 PM

To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Subject: Hearing for Public Input on proposed projects Dec 5th

All of the \$17 million can easily be used up for road repair and repaving. Please prioritize the maintenance of County roads at TOP PRIORITY #1. Chip seal patches or Type 2 slurry seal is only a band aid and should not be considered a structural repair. Full width asphalt overlays are needed in many of our roads. If you keep waiting they will need to be dug up and rebuilt at TRIPLE THE COST. Please be responsible and do not neglect our public road system. The other items are nice but not necessary for all concerned.

Jim Cumming
4605 Nova Dr.
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

From: Becky Steinbruner <ki6tkb@yahoo.com>

Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2019 2:12 AM

To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>

Subject: Comment re: December 5, 2019 RTC Consideration of RSTPX Fund Allocation

Dear Regional Transportation Commissioners,
I respectfully request that your Commission deny any and all RSTPX funding for the Santa Cruz County Project at Aptos Creek Road in Aptos Village as it is proposed.

Why is no funding being requested for the Mar Vista Bicycle / Pedestrian Overcrossing?

Why is no funding being requested for the Harkins Slough / Hwy 1 Pedestrian / Bicycle Overcrossing in Watsonville? On March 2, 2017, the RTC redirected funding for improvements to the pedestrian overcrossing to serve the safety of the Pajaro Valley High School student population, yet this crucial project is not included for funding now.

The County's proposal before you for consideration now will mark the **fourth** time the County has requested funding for this project, dating back to 2013, focusing an unreasonable amount of public funding to mitigate the impacts of the Aptos Village Project subdivision. It is essentially a gift of public money to benefit private developers, and should not be approved any further.

1) On December 7, 2017, your Commission approved \$1,9 Million for the Aptos Creek Road intersection improvement, known as Aptos Village Traffic Improvement Project Phase 2.

2) On March 2, 2017, your Commission approved \$325,000 in RTIP funding for this Project, re-directing remaining funds from the Salsipuedes School crossing improvements to fund the Aptos Village Traffic Improvement Projects.

3) On September 1, 2016, your Commission approve \$200,000 for the Phase 2 improvements, and \$440,000 for the Phase 1 improvements at Trout Gulch Road and Soquel Drive intersection.

4) On November, 2016, your Commission approved \$1.8 Million for the Phase 1 improvements, noting that the Phase 2 improvements were pending approval from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for the new Parade Street crossing to Soquel Drive to provide a gateway entrance to the Aptos Village Project, with Aptos Creek Road intersection improvement construction costs estimated at \$2.3 Million).

Here is a Project description from the 2016 RTIP Funding Allocation Report:

"Modifications for ped, bike, bus and auto traffic. Add pedestrian facilities and drainage infrastructure on both sides of Soquel Dr; improve bike lanes; new bike parking; new bus pullout and shelter on north side. Trout Gulch: Replace sidewalks with standard sidewalks on east side, ADA upgrades to west side sidewalks. Install traffic signals at Soquel Dr/Aptos Creek Rd & Soquel/Trout Gulch. Left turn lanes on Soquel at new street - Parade St and at Aptos Creek Road. RR crossing modifications - new crossing arms, concrete panels for vehicle and pedestrian crossings. New RR xing at Parade St. Phase 1: Trout Gulch Rd improvements w/traffic signal and upgraded RR xg at Soquel Dr. Pavement overlay of Soquel Dr (Spreckels to Trout Gulch) and a portion of Aptos Creek Road. Soquel from 350 ft west of Aptos Creek Rd to 150 ft east west of Trout Gulch Rd (1230 ft); Trout Gulch from Soquel to Valencia St (390 ft) Aptos Village Plan Improvements"

"Comments: To be constructed in two phases, due to PUC process and private development timing. 9/1/16 - RTC approved \$650k STBG, exchanged for RSTPX - with conditions: include bike parking racks and consider transit prioritization at signals. 2/7/13: \$690k RSTPX approved by RTC - RSTPX\$440K Ph. 1, \$200k ph. 2. 10/14: Update schedule, awaiting PUC approval for Aptos Creek and Parade St crossings. 3/5/15: RTIP amended to shift construction funds to FY15/16. Ph. 1 construction contract awarded 11/16 for \$1.8M. Ph. 2 est. cost: \$2.3m"

The Aptos Village Transportation Improvement Project Phase 2 does not include any funding for a new bus stop at Aptos Creek Road intersection. This is the gateway to Nisene Marks State Park and to the County-owned Aptos Village Park, the site of many annual large music and food festivals. In order to best serve the people who would use public transportation, there must be a convenient bus stop in this area. However, now that the Aptos Village Traffic Improvement Project Phase 1 work at Trout Gulch Road intersection nearly moved the bus stop further to the east, use of public transportation is not convenient, and this presents a significant barrier to Metro use.

There are no sidewalks along Soquel Drive from Trout Gulch Road to the County park, so if festival goers do use public transportation to attend the events, they must either walk in the Soquel Drive Bike Lane, along the railroad track (which is difficult for those with mobility challenges to navigate) or walk through the private parking lot at Aptos Station businesses, where drivers are backing out of spaces with limited visibility to see pedestrians.

This Project, if funded, must include new bus stops to be constructed on both sides of Soquel Drive to better accommodate and encourage the use of public transportation to and from Aptos Village.

Also, in previous funding awards for this Aptos Village Traffic Improvement Phase 2 Project, the funding had conditions that there would be bicycle parking racks installed at the Aptos Creek Road intersection. **The current Project proposal does not include bicycle parking racks, nor does it mention signal prioritization for buses, as it did in prior years of funding requests.**

Please do not approve any further funding for a the traffic light at Aptos Creek Road intersection. Please do not fund any improvements whatsoever for the Parade Street intersection. That intersection would serve only the developer interests, and therefore, the developers should carry the burden of construction costs, not the public.

Sincerely,
Becky Steinbruner

From: nancy maynard <scrippsmom@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2019 12:55 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>
Subject: Funding for roads

We need local preservation
Nancy Maynard

From: Hal Stanger <hjstange@pacbell.net>
Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2019 5:52 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>
Subject: Use of \$17m

I have little or no faith in the SCTC. I know that the commission's public input is your attempt to pacify us tax payers and residents that we were allowed to "participate," yet only to be ignored as it has been for at least the last 12 years. The commission has never really represented we the people. Yet past transportation commission vested priorities take precedent, like the fantasy rail boondoggle, over what the taxpayers and residents really need and want. The transportation commission do not represent us, never has, but simply what the commission members themselves want and have their vested interests. Anyway, here goes. As a starter and not necessarily in order of priority:

- 1) Build the corridor trail now
- 2) Repair and pave Capitola Rd by the mall
- 3) Repair and pave 41st Ave
- 4) Portola cross walk blinking warning signs
- 5) Add more lanes to Highway 1
- 6) Fix the stairs to the beach at 38th before the county gets both sued or someone is seriously injured
- 7) Smaller public transportation vans to replace the huge under patronized polluting buses or use subsidized cheaper Uber.
- 8) Scrap the rail boondoggle
- 9) Scrap the fantasy and confusing world of roundabouts and use lights.
- 10) Stop spending the transportation finite moneys and don't spend the \$17m on endless studies like the boondoggle rail.

Regards,
Hal

From: Shoobdoowah <shoobdoowah@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 28, 2019 12:29 AM
To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>
Subject: Transportation routes

One project that would greatly alleviate traffic congestion in a few areas, and likely save lives: Bear Creek Rd in Boulder Creek. San Lorenzo Valley residents would take this route if the portion near Hwy 17 would be 'straightened out'. Like the first three miles or so from Boulder Creek, it would save much time, instead of having to go through anguishing pinhead twists and turns.

From: Frank Remde <verandavineyard1@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, November 29, 2019 1:39 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>
Subject: Lakeview Road Widening and resurfacing

The condition of Lakeview Road between Carlton and College Road is pathetic and inexcusable. To not find it on the list of proposed projects defies explanation. It is "unsafe at any speed "in the words of Ralph nader. It is unsafe to motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. It needs widening and complete resurfacing. To add a bike lane without widening would be a big mistake. Maybe the Transportation Commision should hold one of its meetings at the Rod and Gun Club off Lakeview to get a sense of what I am saying. I'm sure the Rod and Gun Board of Director's would approve the use of its facilities. Be careful when making the trip. Frank

From: Melinda Kehn <Melinda.Kehn@santacruzcounty.us>
Sent: Monday, December 02, 2019 9:59 AM
To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>
Subject: Project funding

Can you sent out a survey with the list of proposed projects and have everyone pick top 5 to help narrow choices?

From: Ellen Martinez <ellen@ellenmartinez.com>
Sent: Monday, December 02, 2019 5:12 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>
Cc: 'Ellen Martinez' <ellen@ellenmartinez.com>; joexmart@comcast.net
Subject: 2020 TIP Public Hearing

Thank you for the opportunity to review your plan and provide comments on how to optimally spend the \$17 million for Santa Cruz County Transportation Projects.

Here are my spending recommendations:

Santa Cruz METRO	Santa Cruz METRO ParaCruz Van Replacement	\$200,000
Watsonville	Road Maintenance (Various Locations)	\$1,129,518

Additionally, I would like to see dollars allocated for Aptos road maintenance (various locations) as I do not anything listed for the roads to be maintained in Aptos (only Aptos Village).

The above activities are the ONLY activities that I wish to have money spent on in the FIRST set of activities.

The remainder of the dollars from the first set of activities should be allocated to the activities outlined below.

Proposed Regional Projects for Regional Funds

Project (RTC Lead Agency)

Proposed Funding

Hwy 1 41st Ave/Soquel Ave Auxiliary Lanes, Bus on Shoulders, & Chanticleer Bike/Ped Bridge : Construction	\$4,914,000 – STIP
Hwy 1 Bay/Porter to State Park Auxiliary Lanes & Bus on Shoulders : Design	\$1,639,608 – HIP
Hwy 1 Freedom Blvd to State Park Auxiliary Lanes & Bus on Shoulders : Environmental	\$302,000 – LPP
Regional Planning, Programming, and Monitoring (PPM) – <i>State & fed mandated activities</i>	\$169,000 – STIP

A final set of requests:

- Please do not spend any budget or any money on any more rail corridor studies. The County has already spent a huge amount of time and budget on studies.
- I understand that, included in the RTC's spending plan is funding for a new tourist trolley to privately operate. The Coastal Corridor was purchased to provide transportation solutions, not to operate a recreational vehicle through the community. Please focus on your role of providing active transportation solutions to the community you serve.
- I also understand that the RTC is claiming that upgrading the rail corridor tracks to class/freight conditions will allow for the transfer of track responsibility to Progressive Rail. As you know, Progressive Rail has informed the RTC that there is no freight business north of Buena Vista Road (milepost 7) to Davenport, and they have no intention of taking over responsibility for this portion of the corridor. Therefore, upgrading these tracks is an absolute waste of taxpayer dollars.

Sincerely,
Ellen Martinez

From: Susan Cavalieri <susanwcavalieri@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 02, 2019 4:13 PM
To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>
Subject: transportation projects

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to share with all of you that I fear the future my grandchildren will experience. As reported in the Guardian, 11,000 scientists report that people around the world will "face untold suffering due to the climate crisis" if drastic changes are not made in how we live.
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/nov/05/climate-crisis-11000-scientists-warn-of-untold-suffering>

Each day I feel powerless in the face of horrific climate degradation. We all know burning fossil fuels is destroying life on earth. Therefore, driving must be discouraged and we need a different approach to transportation with bikes, walking and public transit. Auxiliary lanes on highway 1 from Soquel Ave. to State Park Dr. and the widening of the Highway 1/Highway 9 intersection encourages driving and business as usual, and must not be funded if emissions are to be reduced. Direct funds instead to public transit and separated bike lanes.

In an article in the Santa Cruz Sentinel today, 12/2/19, António Guterrez, the United Nations Secretary General, is reported to have announced, ahead of the Madrid climate conference, that the world must act now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, or we will be unable to reverse the

devastation caused by climate warming. He also said that humanity has the ability now to decrease emissions, but "what is lacking is political will." Limiting driving will decrease emissions in Santa Cruz County. Do each of you have the political courage lead us in a new direction? Our youth will be marching for a livable future on Friday, Dec. 6. We need to give them hope. We all need hope.

Please vote to aggressively limit both driving and our climate heating emissions. Please do not fund requests for the highway 1 and 9 intersection in Santa Cruz or the Highway 1 auxiliary lanes. Instead fund bus on shoulder and bus rapid transit.

Thank you.

Susan Cavalieri
190 Walnut Ave., #101
Santa Cruz

From: Julie and Jim Montgomery <julijim@pacbell.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 04, 2019 6:06 AM
To: Regional Transportation Commission <info@sccrtc.org>
Subject: Please act to advance transit solutions for Santa Cruz County

Dear RTC Commissioners,

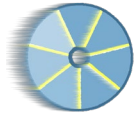
Thank you for all your great work to develop improvements to transportation options in Santa Cruz County. I am writing to encourage you to continue to move forward by adopting item 22, the 2020 Regional Transportation Improvement Program and approving item 25, the resolution to authorize a contract for rail track repairs to allow a demonstration of rail service on the Santa Cruz Branch line on the December 5th agenda.

Development of the rail corridor to provide rail transit and construction of protected bike paths are important elements in a comprehensive plan to address gridlock in the county. Repairing the tracks to provide an opportunity to demonstrate the potential of rail transit on the corridor will help to expand community support for this option. The urban areas of the county are bursting at the seams with too many cars simply because there is no other way to move around. Reliable and dependable transit options can reduce this reliance on cars. Fewer cars on our roads in turn will provide opportunities for the development of protected bike lanes.

Thank you for your consideration

Regards,
Julie Montgomery

2077 Redwood Drive
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
julijim@pacbell.net



Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Re. Item 22: Adoption of the Regional Transportation Improvement Program

December 2, 2019

Dear Commissioners,

There are two projects in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) that fail to meet the state's goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The first project proposes to use State Transportation Improvement Program funding, but is not in alignment with the STIP Guidelines (updated Aug 14, 2019). Failure to align the RTIP with the STIP Guidelines is considered grounds for rejection of the RTIP by the California Transportation Commission. The two projects are:

- A. auxiliary lanes on Highway 1 between Soquel Ave. and State Park Dr.
- B. expansion of the intersection of Highway 1 and Highway 9 (River St.)

A. Hwy 1 Auxiliary Lanes fails to meet STIP Guidelines

1) The Auxiliary Lanes Project does not take climate change into account.

The STIP Guidelines state,

Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-30-15 on April 29, 2015, related to climate change and ordering that a new interim statewide greenhouse gas emission reduction target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030... Executive Order B-30-15 must be considered by the Department and Regional Agencies when proposing new programming for the 2020 STIP...

According to the Caltrans EIR on Highway 1 projects, there would be a 25% increase in greenhouse gases resulting from the TSM Alternative relative to the No Build Alternative at year 2035.¹ The TSM Alternative includes auxiliary lanes and ramp metering on most segments of Hwy 1 from Soquel Ave to Freedom Blvd.

2) The analysis of full life-cycle costs is lacking

The STIP Guidelines further note:

For projects with total cost of \$50 million or greater, or STIP programming for right-of-way and/or construction of \$15 million or more, a project specific benefit evaluation will be performed to estimate its benefit to the regional system from changes to the built environment. Consistent with Executive Order B-30-15, the project specific benefit evaluation must include a full life-cycle cost evaluation and take climate change impacts into account.

The EIR that analyzed the TSM Alternative, of which the Auxiliary Lane Project is a part, did not analyze full life-cycle costs.

¹ Table 3-2, page 3-14

3) The Auxiliary Lanes Project does not perform well on criteria of safety and congestion relief.

The STIP Guidelines section 19 states that the California Transportation Commission will evaluate each RTIP based on performance. Criteria for evaluating performance include:

- congestion relief
- fatalities and serious injuries
- vehicle miles traveled per capita
- commute mode share

According to Caltran's EIR, the TSM Alternative, of which the Auxiliary Lanes Project are a part, performs poorly on these criteria:

- Building the TSM Alternative "would result in a very slight improvement in traffic congestion when compared to the No Build Alternative".²
- The EIR predicts "severe breakdown of State Route 1 by year 2035" following completion of the TSM Alternative.³
- "The Tier I Corridor TSM Alternative would not achieve sufficient congestion relief to attract any substantial number of vehicles that had diverted to the local street system back to the freeway."⁴
- "The total accident rates overall and by segment in 2035 under the Tier I Corridor TSM Alternative would be the same as the accident rates for the No Build Alternative."⁵
- The EIR does not evaluate vehicle miles traveled per capita. However it reports that total vehicle miles traveled would increase by 44% (morning peak hour) and 24% (afternoon peak hour) relative to the No Build Alternative in year 2035.⁶
- The EIR does not evaluate commute mode share.

4) Bus-On-Shoulder without auxiliary lanes should be analyzed for cost-effectiveness

The STIP Guidelines section 19 states that the California Transportation Commission will evaluate each RTIP based on cost effectiveness.

The EIR on Highway 1 projects, certified in January, 2019, failed to analyze bus-on-shoulder as an alternative to auxiliary lanes and the TSM Alternative. The EIR should have studied this alternative because the state legislature expressed early support when it passed AB 946 in 2013, authorizing the Monterey-Salinas Transit District and the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District to conduct a transit bus-only program using the shoulders of Highway 1. MST and METRO collaborated on a *Bus-on-Shoulder Feasibility Study* published in June 2018.

When the Highway 1 Draft EIR was published in November, 2015, our organization submitted a comment on the Draft asking that the EIR analyze bus-on-shoulder and other transit strategies as an alternative to the Project. However, this analysis was not done.

Recently the Regional Transportation Commission has indicated support for bus-on-shoulder as an addition to the Auxiliary Lane Project. However, Auxiliary Lanes are not needed in order for a bus-only lane to be constructed on the shoulder of Highway 1. The *Bus on Shoulder Feasibility Study* (2018) indicated that options exist for bus-only lanes in the median of Hwy 1 as well as the right shoulder. The Study indicated that for \$12 million a bus-on-shoulder lane could be implemented in

² page 2.1.5-16

³ page 2.1.5-14

⁴ page 2.1.5-17

⁵ page 2.1.5-17

⁶ Table 2.1.5-7

the Southbound direction on 4.2 miles of the 7.5 mile distance from Santa Cruz to Freedom Blvd. In contrast, the 4 mile Auxiliary Lane Project would cost over \$100 million, not counting bus-on-shoulder infrastructure added to the Project. Monterey County bus-on-shoulder project is listed in the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) *Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)*. However, bus-on-shoulder in Santa Cruz County is not listed in the *MTP* because funding for this project is not constrained (identified).

The failure to analyze and compare the cost effectiveness of bus-on-shoulder with and without auxiliary lanes does not meet the STIP mandate to analyze cost effectiveness.

B. Expansion of the intersection of Highway 1 and Highway 9 (River St.)

- Would undermine achievement of state climate change goals by increasing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gases
- Would expend funds that could be spent on achieving safer streets for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Is inconsistent with the City's General Plan

A project that increases auto capacity tends to result in an increase in vehicle miles traveled. Caltrans' *Mitigated Negative Declaration* (2015) on this project states:

“Annual 2030 carbon dioxide emissions equivalents are expected to increase with implementation of the project relative to the 2030 no-project condition.” [Table 2-15 indicates a 10% increase]

The cost of the intersection expansion project would come at the expense of other projects that would reduce auto dependency and injuries to bicyclists and pedestrians. The RTIP requests \$2 million in RSTPX funds and transfer an additional \$188,000 that is already programmed for improvements to Frederick St. at Soquel Ave that include bike lanes. The City of Santa Cruz rationale for the transfer is that there are insufficient funds to complete the Frederick St. project. However, the \$188,000 should be adequate to complete the bike lane portion of the project. Please delete this transfer from the RTIP.

RSTPX is a source of funds that could be used on projects that make streets safer in the cities and County. The State Office of Traffic Safety has rated Santa Cruz #1 in rate of injuries to bicyclists in each of the years 2013-2016 out of 104 cities of similar size and an average of #11 over those years in rate of injuries to pedestrians. Watsonville consistently rates near the top in injuries to pedestrians. It is time for all of us to recognize that prioritizing projects that increase auto capacity perpetuates needless injuries in our community.

The Hwy 1 & Hwy 9 intersection project plans to use over \$4 million in local Traffic Impact Fees (TIF), an amount that approximates the total TIF fund balance. These are funds that won't be spent on reducing the unacceptable rate of injuries on our streets.

This project is inconsistent with the City of Santa Cruz General Plan's measures, including:

- “Seek ways to reduce vehicle trip demand and reduce the number of peak hour vehicle trips.”
- “Accept a lower level of service and higher congestion at major regional intersections if necessary improvements would be prohibitively costly or result in significant, unacceptable environmental impacts.”

Faced with public opposition, in June, 2019 the City Council referred this project to the City's Transportation and Public Works Commission. The Commission has yet to review the project.

Both Projects Require Mitigation

The EIR for AMBAG's *Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy* requires

the following mitigation measure:

T-5 Project-Level VMT Analysis and Reduction

Transportation project sponsor agencies shall evaluate transportation projects that involve increasing roadway capacity for their potential to increase VMT. Where project-level increases are found to be potentially significant, implementing agencies shall identify and implement measures that reduce VMT. Examples of measures that reduce the VMT associated with increases in roadway capacity include tolling new lanes to encourage carpools and fund transit improvements; converting existing general purpose lanes to high occupancy vehicle lanes; and implementing or funding off-site travel demand management.

Neither the Auxiliary Lanes Project nor the Hwy 1 & Hwy 9 Intersection Project have developed measures to reduce VMT, as required by this EIR.

Both Projects Are Inconsistent with Governor Newsom's Executive Order issued on September 20, 2019 to "Align the state's climate goals with transportation spending."

Conclusion

Please remove these projects from the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan in order to align our spending with our goals for climate and safety.

Thank you,



Rick Longinotti