



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

1523 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060-3911 • (831) 460-3200 FAX (831) 460-3215 EMAIL info@sccrtc.org

December 12, 2019

Matt Machado
County of Santa Cruz
Director of Public Works
701 Ocean Street, Room 410
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Mr. Machado:

The Bicycle Advisory Committee of the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) appreciates the recent presentation from County Public Works staff regarding the Aptos Village Improvements Project Phase 2B, which includes RTC-approved funds from the Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange.

The Committee is very appreciative of the planned improvements to enhance bike lane visibility and to upgrade the railroad crossing at Aptos Creek Road.

The Committee is concerned with the proposed removal of the bike lane on westbound Soquel Drive between Aptos Creek Road and the Soquel Drive bridge over Aptos Creek. Even though bicyclists currently must merge into the vehicle lane at the bridge, it would still be preferred not to lose the bike lane before that merge is necessary. Soquel Drive is an important regional bicycle route, on which the RTC proposes buffered or separated bike lanes as part of the Unified Corridor Study recommendations to improve bicycle transportation mode share in Santa Cruz County.

A majority of the Committee requests that the County consider using the existing roadway right-of-way to construct the proposed new sidewalk, rather than removing the existing bike lane. If it is too costly or time-constrained to address the private parking lot, which appears to encroach into the roadway right-of-way, the Committee's preference is to defer construction of the sidewalk until that can be addressed. Please look for other opportunities to improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians in this area, such as widening the bridge over Aptos Creek and constructing Segment 12 of the Coastal Rail Trail.

Thank you for considering our request and for your commitment to increasing the use of bicycles for transportation.

Sincerely,

Amelia Conlen
Chair, Bicycle Advisory Committee

cc:

Tim Nguyen, County of Santa Cruz Public Works, Civil Engineer and Project Manager
Russell Chen, County of Santa Cruz Public Works, Senior Civil Engineer
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's Bicycle Committee

AGENDA: January 16, 2020

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Guy Preston, Executive Director
RE: Director's Report

THIS ITEM FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Transportation Planner and Planning Technician Appointments

Over the past couple of months, RTC has been recruiting to fill its vacant Planner and Planning technician positions.

I am pleased to announce that the RTC has hired Amanda Marino to fill the remaining vacant Transportation Planner position. Amanda graduated with a Bachelor of Science double major in Planning, Public Policy, and Management & Environmental Studies, with a minor in Earth Sciences from the University of Oregon. Since her graduation she has been working as a Transportation Coordinator at the Lane County Transit District in Eugene Oregon, where she worked on a congestion mitigation program to target neighborhoods to address barriers to choosing transportation options. Amanda also has experience working with GIS and conducting environmental studies. We expect that Amanda will work with various RTC committees as well as RTC's Traffic Demand Management program. Amanda is expected to start work on Monday, February 2, 2020.

I am also pleased to announce that RTC has appointed Jason Thompson into a permanent Transportation Planning Technician position. Jason started working at RTC in June 2019 as a provisional Transportation Planning Technician. Jason graduated in 2016 from Cal Poly with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forestry and Natural Resource Management. His experience working with utility companies and vegetation control has been very useful on the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line. Jason has also gained experience working on the Regional Conservation Investment Strategy and traffic demand management. Jason will continue working on maintenance of the rail right-of-way, as well as assisting Transportation Planners in various assignments.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that RTC has appointed Fernanda Pini into a permanent Transportation Planning Technician position. Fernanda commenced working at RTC in November 2017 as an Administrative Assistant III. Fernanda has a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from the University of Maryland. While working at RTC, Fernanda has attended classes at San Jose State University as a candidate for a Masters in Public Administration. In July of 2019, I appointed Fernanda to a provisional Transportation Planning Technician position and immediately assigned her to assist me in the preparation of the inaugural Measure D implementation plan, the draft of which was released last month. Fernanda is expected to assist Transportation Planners in various functions, with a focus on programming, contract management, and legislative issues. With Fernanda's appointment

to the Transportation Planning Technician position, RTC has an opening for an Administrative Assistant for which we are actively recruiting.

MBSST Projects

Segment 7, Phase I of the coastal rail trail will be breaking ground soon. To celebrate this milestone, Ecology Action and Friends of the Rail Trail will be hosting a groundbreaking celebration on Jan. 25 from 1-3 p.m. at Santa Cruz Mountain Brewing. All members of the community are invited.

The City of Watsonville opened construction bids on a portion of Segment 18, between Ohlone Parkway and the Watsonville Slough Trail, on December 17, 2019. Staff is expected to make a recommendation on awarding a construction contract to the apparent low bidder at their next City Council meeting on January 21, 2020.

Highway 1 Projects

RTC staff continues to work on the delivery of the Highway 1 - Bus on Shoulders (BOS)/Auxiliary Lane projects. These projects are consistent with the direction of the State towards multi-modal highway projects, as they include bicycle overcrossings and will promote transit use with the BOS component. The projects have been very popular with California Transportation Commission (CTC) staff and are expected to compete well for the next cycle of Senate Bill 1 (SB1) – Solutions to Congested Corridors Program (SCCP) funding.

The first project from 41st Avenue to Soquel Avenue is in final design and will be ready for construction, pending grant funds, in 2021. Staff has started work on environmental clearance of the second project, from State Park to Bay Porter, and has interviewed and ranked firms to perform environmental clearance for the third project from Freedom to State Park. Staff expects to provide a recommendation for a consultant contract for the Freedom to State Park project at the February RTC meeting. Environmental Clearance on these two projects will allow these projects to compete for SB1 funding in the subsequent round of SB1 SCCP funding, expected in 2022.

TIG(m) Trolley Demonstration Postponed

In December, the RTC approved a temporary license agreement with TIG/m for demonstration of a passenger rail trolley vehicle. The demonstration was being planned to begin on February 14, 2020. TIG/m has been working on approvals of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and has determined that it may not be able to secure approvals in time for a demonstration in February. Therefore, TIG/m has notified RTC staff that it will need to postpone the demonstration to allow sufficient time to obtain all approvals and also prepare a more comprehensive marketing plan, as requested by the Commission at our December 2019 meeting.

Due to a desire to ensure that there are no potential conflicts between the Santa Cruz Big Trees and Pacific Railroad trains to the Santa Cruz Boardwalk and the proposed trolley demonstration, the next window for a potential demonstration is October 2020. An October

demonstration will give both TIG(m) and RTC sufficient time to advertise and prepare for this event. Staff will keep the RTC informed and will return as appropriate with proposed revisions to the license and the details for the trolley demonstration.

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Draft 2020 Measure D Strategic Implementation Plan

Comments received between Jan. 07, 2020 and Jan. 15, 2020



January 14, 2020

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Attn. Ed Bottorff, Chair
1523 Pacific Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: 2020 Measure D Strategic Implementation Plan

Dear Chairman Bottorff and Members of the Commission,

Big Creek Lumber Company appreciates the effort the Commission has put into preparing your 2020 Measure D Strategic Implementation Plan. We are particularly pleased that the Implementation Plan recommends ongoing support for rail freight service on the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) rail corridor. As we have previously testified, Big Creek's retail building supply facility in Watsonville has been receiving freight shipments by rail for nearly fifty years. Rail shipments help our company remain competitive and freight delivered by rail significantly reduces our company's carbon footprint.

As the SCCRTC moves forward with establishing rail/trail access on your rail corridor we would like to specifically point out Coastal Rail Trail Segment 18. This section of the corridor passes directly behind and contains the rail spur that serves Big Creek's Watsonville facility. We look forward to collaborating with the SCCRTC to help ensure that future public access on this segment does not inadvertently impact our ability to receive rail freight, or create any negative impacts to our business or to public safety.

From a broader perspective, the SCCRTC should develop plans and policies regarding use of the entire corridor in a manner that protects adjacent farmlands and private property while maintaining existing rail services and providing safe use of the corridor by the public. We strongly recommend that the SCCRTC works directly with the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau to achieve these positive outcomes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Janet M. Webb", is written over a horizontal line.

Janet McCrary Webb
President

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January 14, 2020

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
1523 Pacific Ave.
Santa Cruz CA 95060

RE: Friends of the Rail & Trail Comments on *2020 Measure D Strategic Implementation Plan*

Dear Commissioners and Staff:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Draft 2020 Measure D Strategic Implementation Plan*. Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail & Trail (FORT) appreciates your consideration of our comments on this ambitious plan.

In general, the proposed *Implementation Plan* is useful as a comprehensive review of the status of three-year old Measure D and as a preliminary analysis of project financing both within Measure D revenues and with non-Measure D funding as may be necessary to complete high-priority projects specified in the measure. But we do have some concerns which we will outline below.

First, cost estimates for many of the Regional Projects in all categories are significantly higher than previous estimates in Measure D and other planning documents. We understand, this is one of the challenges being addressed with the draft *Implementation Plan*: how can the RTC deliver Measure D projects in a timely and effective manner with Measure D and other state and federal transportation appropriations?

Second, we note that a new project has been added to Measure D (Highway I Auxiliary Lanes & Bus on Shoulder, State Park Dr. to Freedom Blvd.) We believe that if the RTC intends to allocate Measure D funds toward this (or any other) new project, that project or program should be amended into the Measure D Expenditure Plan.

Our third concern is in the "Rail Corridor: Analysis of Options" project fact sheet (p. 89-90). It says "The RTC will likely need to secure additional grant funds for feasibility and environmental work, depending on the final scope of the proposed project." The Rail Corridor Project was included in Measure D explicitly to provide funding for the full feasibility and environmental/preliminary design phase of the passenger rail transit planning program as well as funds to maintain the rail line in a functional condition. The above statement also runs counter to the commitment and assertion elsewhere in the draft *Plan* that Measure D funds should cover project development work in order to make projects 'construction ready' for programming other potentially available state and federal funds.

Draft 2020 Measure D Strategic Implementation Plan

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Also, FORT notes a few minor inconsistencies:

- The Rail Corridor category of Transportation Investments is left off of Table 2-1
- Project schedules for many of the projects seem overly optimistic given the amount of non-Measure D funds needed
- The project fact sheet for "Rail Corridor: Analysis of Options" includes images of a bus and a freight hauler, but not a modern rail transit vehicle!

Finally, FORT would like to express its strong support for efforts to enhance the organizational and functional capacity of the SCCRTC to deliver the Measure D program and the significant regional projects for which it is responsible.

We look forward to continuing to be a consistent ally to the RTC as it implements the county's Measure D transportation enhancement program into the future. Thank you very much for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Sally Arnold

Sally Arnold

Board Chair, Friends of the Rail & Trail

Draft 2020 Measure D Strategic Implementation Plan

Comments received between Jan. 07, 2020 and Jan. 15, 2020

From: Neil Waldhauer <neil@blondeguy.com>

Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2020 2:10 PM

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

Subject: Comment on 2020 Measure D Strategic Implementation Plan

The section on Rail Corridor: Analysis of Options will to look at how the rest of California will use passenger rail in the future. This needs to be done fairly. I'd prefer to see passenger rail chosen, but I want the analysis to be fair.

best regards,
Neil Waldhauer

From: Tina Andreatta <tina.marieotr@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2020 11:30 AM

To: SIP <sip@sccrtc.org>

Subject: Please continue building the trail and rail

To Whom It May Concern,

Please without any further delay complete the 32 mile bicycle pedestrian path and immediately implement passenger rail along the entire rail corridor.

Sincerely,
Tina Andreatta

From: Brian Peoples <brian@trailnow.org>

Sent: Monday, January 13, 2020 6:39 PM

To: SIP <sip@sccrtc.org>

Subject: Measure D SIP response

RTC,

Trail Now supported Measure D because transportation is a key to a communities' quality-of-life; poor transportation systems impact everyone's daily lives. Trail Now supporters contributed the greatest amount of funds to get Measure D approved and we believe it is critical that the funds be effectively invested to help ensure a continuous trail is built within 10-years, as stated by RTC Executive Director Guy Preston.

Unfortunately, the Measure D SIP does not provide a plan to build the continuous Santa Cruz Coastal Trail in 10 years. The SIP plan only identifies 9 out of 20 Segments of the trail that will be built, with no plans to build a continuous trail with Measure D SIP. The cost to build a trail adjacent to an old railroad track and over 20 trestles is proving to be not affordable for our community. Based on the difference between MBSST cost estimates and current Measure D

Draft 2020 Measure D Strategic Implementation Plan

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SIP cost, the overall trail will not be \$126M, but over \$325M. Measure D SIP only provides \$43M for construction of trail. Attached is a list of all the segments and identified cost.

There is a critical need to begin use the Santa Cruz Coastal Corridor NOW for alternative transportation. We propose using key sections of the Santa Cruz Coastal railroad corridor TODAY as a trail, without removing the rails, with a "platform-trail". These engineered platforms will be located at key locations along the coastal corridor, playing a vital role of improving mobility across the coastal areas. The proposal will be to build approximately 3.5 miles of trail that range from 8 to 15 feet wide (attached).

Key Sections from Manresa to Davenport

- o Manresa Beach
- o La Selva Trestle
- o Aptos South Trestle / Rio Del Mar underpass
- o State Park Drive./ Aptos North Trestle
- o Capitola Trestle
- o Seabright Ave (Harbor Bridge) / 7th Ave
- o Boardwalk Trestle / Murray Bridge underpass
- o Antonelli Pond Trestle
- o North Coast (Farmland)

These "temporary" platform-trails can be removed for railroad inspections, rail operation and meet all railroad compliance (CPUC, STB, FRA, CTC).

We request that the Measure D SIP plan includes a platform-trail be built.

We support investing in Highway 1, widening (Tier I plans, HOV Lanes, metering ramps) from Santa Cruz to Larkin Valley Road. Highway widening reduces surface-street traffic by keeping big, heavy traffic flow through the highway corridor. Studies showed that widening highway would move the greatest number of people and commerce per local dollars spent. We support leveraging Measure D funds for SB1 opportunities that improve traffic flow and mobility along the state's most congested routes through the Solutions to Congested Corridors Program (SCCP).

Best regards,

Brian Peoples

Executive Director

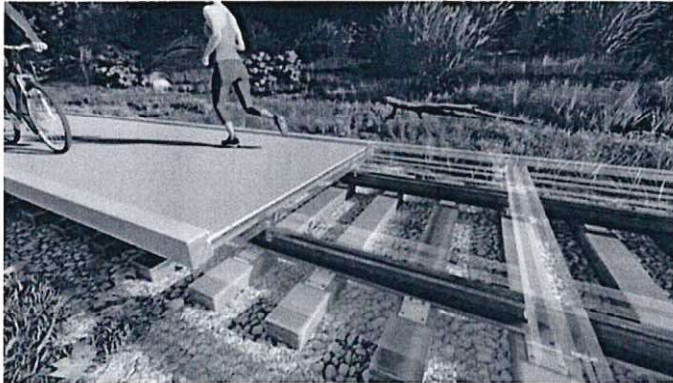
TrailNow.org

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"Platform Trail" Concept



Platform Trail versus Rail & Trail

Platform Trail

- ☐ Fraction of cost to a Rail & Trail
- ☐ Reduced tree & brush cutting
- ☐ Wetlands remain intact
- ☐ No excavation or culvert work
- ☐ Support long-term trail plans
- ☐ Support long-term transit plans
- ☐ Reduce local traffic congestion
- ☐ Increase public access
- ☐ Generate "trail-use" data
- ☐ Meet all railroad requirements
- ☐ Meet all CTC requirements
- ☐ Supported by Progressive Rail
- ☐ Supported by local farmers
- ☐ Built TODAY – not decades from now



Segment 7 Rail & Trail



Measure D Implementation Plan for Rail & Trail

Segment	Area	Original MBSST (in thousands)	2020 RTC Est (in thousands)	Funded (in thousands)	Need (in thousands)	Year Complete	Completed Activity
1	Waddell Beach	\$ 107					
2	Greyhound Rock Beach	\$ 308					
3	Upper Coast Dairies	\$ 2,250					
4	Davenport Landing / End of Railroad Tracks	\$ 2,685					
5	Davenport / Wilder Ranch	\$ 15,006	\$ 22,262	\$ 17,168	\$ 5,094	2021	Final Design
6	Antonelli Pond	\$ 3,116					
7a	New Leaf / Westside	\$ 1,161	\$ 6,700	\$ 6,700	\$ -	2021	Trail Built
7b	Westside / Wharf	\$ 10,057	\$ 13,108	\$ 2,769	\$ 10,339	2020	EIR
8	Santa Cruz Boardwalk	Combined with 9	Combined with 9	Combined with 9	Combined with 9		
9	Twin Lakes	\$ 22,228	\$ 34,634	\$ 8,369	\$ 26,265	2022	EIR
10	Live Oak / Jade Street Park	Combined with 12	Combined w. 12	Combined with 12	Combined with 12		
11	Capitola / Seaciff	Combined with 12	Combined w. 12	Combined with 12	Combined with 12		
12	Aptos Village	\$ 29,406	\$ 66,331	\$ 4,000	\$ 62,331	2022	Final Design
13	Rio Del Mar / Hidden Beach	\$ 3,306					
14	Seascap	\$ 2,079					
15	Manresa	\$ 4,735					
16	Ellicott Slough	\$ 3,613					
17	Harkins Slough	\$ 19,961					
18	Watsonville Slough Open Space	\$ 3,010	\$ 9,102	\$ 4,051	\$ 5,051	2022	Trail Built
19	Walker Street / Watsonville	\$ 381					
20	Pajaro River	\$ 3,009					
Total:		\$ 126,418	\$ 152,137	\$ 43,057	\$ 109,080		

Draft 2020 Measure D Strategic Implementation Plan

Comments received between Jan. 07, 2020 and Jan. 15, 2020

From: woodsywoman@aol.com <woodsywoman@aol.com>

Sent: Sunday, January 12, 2020 7:39 AM

To: SIP <sip@sccrtc.org>

Subject: Transportation plan comment

Hello,

I have read through the proposed projects. I see that no improvements for bike or pedestrian safety on Hwy 236 are being planned. This is disappointing as it connects slv with big basin state park. I commute from Hwy 236 in Boulder Creek to Watsonville most weekdays. I hope that with the addition of trains and rails, the commute on public transit won't take 3.5 hours that it would currently take. If I could get to work in a reasonable amount of time, I would love to not drive, saving fuel and the environment.

The other planned projects look great. I do think Hwy 1 needs to be widened to 3 lanes between santa cruz and Watsonville. I see the terrible backups during my commutes. Hwy 17 could also use 3 lanes as well as a separate, barrier bike lane.

Thank you,

Ann Black

From: Grace Voss <gracevoss@sbcglobal.net>

Sent: Saturday, December 21, 2019 7:14 AM

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

Subject: Programming Funds question

dear RTC...why do you state the cost of each RTC project in your 2045 plan as (in thousands) when each project's actual cost is (in millions)?

grace voss