Focus Areas in 2020:

- Ensure legislative and administrative actions support implementation of priority transportation projects and programs in Santa Cruz County, including projects included in the Measure D Expenditure Plan. Maintain and increase funding for RTC projects and programs, support streamlining and other actions which could expedite delivery of projects, and oppose efforts which could hinder implementation of RTC priorities.

- Support efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve mobility through increased funding for alternative transportation and transit, and support California’s passenger vehicle emission standards.

- Support legislative and administrative actions that will improve safety on state highways and local roads, including actions which would allow for reduction of speed limits and integration of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, especially where state highways serve as main streets.

- Support Transportation Development Act (TDA) program modifications which reduce the burden of outdated performance measures and eliminate the farebox recovery penalty for public transportation systems.

Ongoing Priorities

Transportation Funding

• Protect Transportation Funding: Preserve existing and new funding for transportation projects, maximize funding for Santa Cruz County transportation projects, and preserve regional discretion and priority-setting.

  - Stable, formula funding is essential for addressing the backlog of transportation infrastructure repairs and improvements in Santa Cruz County. Protect current and future taxes and fees and other transportation funds (including Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA), Transportation Development Act (TDA), State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Active Transportation Program (ATP), and other funds) from elimination or diversion to other State programs, General Fund loans, general obligation bond debt service, or to other non-transportation purposes.

  - Ensure that state regulations do not negatively impact implementation of the voter-approved Measure D Expenditure Plan.

  - Online sales taxes: Seek improvements at the Board of Equalization/California Department of Tax and Fee Administration to ensure that distribution of sales taxes on online sales do not negatively impact TDA-LTF and local sales tax measure revenues. Continue to monitor legislative and regulatory efforts to conform state law to ensure that implementation of the
South Dakota v. Wayfair ruling increase transportation funding from local-option sales taxes (METRO and Measure D), TDA, other County of Santa Cruz and city resources.

- Oppose proposals that could tie transportation fund availability to local jurisdictions, to non-transportation and development projects.
- Support new funding for transportation agencies to offset the cost of implementing climate change initiatives and ensure that implementation of the Innovative Clean Transit regulation requiring transition to zero-emission bus fleets and accompanying infrastructure does not result in decreased transit service.

- **Ensure Fair Distribution of Funding:**
  - Ensure state and federal funds are made available for projects in Santa Cruz County, are distributed equitably, and are not disproportionately distributed to large regions. Ensure competitive programs make funding reasonably available for multimodal projects in Santa Cruz County, that address local and regional priorities.
  - **Local Role:** Ensure a strong role for regional and local agencies in planning and determining transportation investment priorities. Support legislation that respects local authority, protecting or expanding local decision-making in programming expenditures of transportation funds, rather than the State making top-down funding decisions that are not community-based. Project and increase direct funding to regions through both federal and state programs; and reinforce and build upon the structure of SB45 that provides regions a strong voice in the programming of state funds.
  - **State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):** Ensure equitable programming and allocation of STIP funds.
  - **“Disadvantaged Communities” Definition:** Broaden the definition of “disadvantaged communities” (DACs) in order to ensure that projects that benefit low-income and other transportation disadvantaged residents of Santa Cruz County are not excluded from funding opportunities that support sustainable communities, transportation choices, and investments in alternative modes of transportation.

- **Increase Funding for All Transportation Modes:** Support measures that increase funding for and support implementation of transportation projects in Santa Cruz County, including funds for ongoing system maintenance, congestion reduction, safety, complete streets, active transportation bike, pedestrian, transit projects, transit-oriented development, and specialized transportation for seniors and people with disabilities in Santa Cruz County.
  - **New funding systems:** Phase in new funding systems which are tied to system use, rather than fuel consumption or fuel prices. May include new user fees, such as a Road User Charge or Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) fee and other alternative funding mechanisms.
o **Expand local revenue-raising opportunities** and innovative financing options to address the significant backlog of transportation needs. Provide locals with the ability to supplement and leverage state funding for investments that protect state and local transportation assets.

  o **Expand the authority of the RTC and local entities to increase taxes and fees** for transportation projects, such as new gas taxes, vehicle registration fees, property-tax financing, and infrastructure financing districts.

  o Support clarifying amendment to Government Code Section 65089.20 that will give RTPAs equal treatment with Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs) to seek voter approval for a local vehicle registration fee. (*SB83 cleanup*)

  o **Lower Vote Threshold:** Support efforts to amend the California constitution to lower the voter threshold for local transportation and affordable housing funding measures, such as local sales tax or vehicle registration fee ballot measures, from the 2/3 supermajority to a simple majority or 55% vote. Support actions which would broaden eligibility in existing and/or new transportation funding streams to enable their use as a subsidy for low-income transportation system users (e.g. discounted fares for public transportation or shared mobility service).

  o **Active Transportation Program (ATP):** Increase ATP funding and ensure potential reforms to the Active Transportation Program (ATP) do not reduce the proportion available for Santa Cruz County agencies to compete for, including funds to the competitive statewide, small urban and rural funding pots. Support efforts to simplify the Active Transportation Program (ATP) project delivery, build local capacity to deliver transformative projects, and provide regions greater flexibility to innovate and strategically invest funds to meet local needs.

  o **Cap & Trade:**
    o Increase percent of Cap & Trade revenues allocated to transportation projects and programs that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Santa Cruz County.
    o Support increases in Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) appropriations
    o Support policy changes to the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program (AHSC) that increase funding opportunities for projects in Santa Cruz County.
    o Ensure continued funding for low and zero emission transit deployment. Ensure regulatory and legislative requirements related to transit electrification provide flexibility, consider cost and available technology, and do not place an undue burden on transit agencies.
    o Support legislation to devote a permanent Cap-and-Trade funding allocation to the Active Transportation Program.

  o **Support options to replace the loss of redevelopment funding,** to support economic development and affordable housing consistent with sustainable community strategies.

  o Support legislation to increase the availability of funding at the regional level to help implement sustainable community strategies, as well as policy tools to reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel in a manner that ensures equitable policy outcomes.

- **Increase and Preserve Funding for Priority Projects in Santa Cruz County:**
  o Projects on Highway 1
  o Local Street and Roadway Preservation
  o Transit projects
  o Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line
  o Bicycle and Pedestrian facilities, including the Monterey Bay
Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST)

- Soquel Avenue-Freedom Boulevard Corridor

**Transportation Development Act (TDA):**
- Monitor potential modifications to the TDA. Ensure funding for transit, planning, administrative, and other TDA purposes in Santa Cruz County are not reduced. Oppose efforts that would reduce TDA funds which are essential for RTC administration and planning.
- Support the development of greater efficiencies within the TDA while streamlining and updating performance metrics and eliminating penalties associated with farebox recovery.
- Support development of alternative performance measures that are focused on incentivizing transit agency actions that improve transit service and increase ridership, consistent with state and regional climate and equity goals.

**Project Implementation**

- **Streamlining, Expediting, Facilitating Project Delivery:** Support administrative and/or legislative efforts which may be required to implement or expedite delivery of priority projects. Includes actions that streamline funding applications, simplify program administration, efforts that modernize and accelerate project delivery.
  - Support the development of greater efficiencies of transportation program implementation, including California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reform, stormwater runoff regulations, CA Fish and Wildlife, CA Water Quality Control Board and California Public Utilities Commission permit and approval processes, to streamline both project development and delivery for priority transportation and transit projects, and eliminating any unnecessary, overly burdensome and/or duplicative mandates.
  - Support legislative and administrative actions required to secure permits that may be required to implement priority projects.
  - Opportunities to expedite transportation project delivery may include increasing contracting and financing options, increased flexibility in early allocation of programmed funds and initiating reimbursable work with local funds in advance of CTC allocation of all projects, efforts that expedite the Caltrans design review process, opportunities to expedite locally-sponsored projects on the state highway system, and increase in encroachment permit limits.
  - Support environmental streamlining measures for bike, pedestrian, transit, and infrastructure preservation within existing public rights of way, and other measures that expedite project delivery. Support efforts that provide for streamlined project delivery for transit projects that fulfill the goals of AB 32 and SB 375, as well as other state and federal air quality mandates and mobility performance measures.
  - Support delegation of fund allocation responsibilities to Caltrans.
  - Allow advance payment of programmed funds, in order to expedite project delivery and resolve cash flow challenges faced especially by small agencies.

- **Advanced Mitigation:** Support implementation of “advanced mitigation” environmental programs, including approving up-front environmental mitigation funding for projects, such as the Highway 17 Wildlife Crossing. Support creation of a low-interest loan program to support advance mitigation and habitat conservation plans that mitigate the impacts of transportation infrastructure and make project implementation more efficient.

- **Safety:** Support legislation and programs that improve transportation safety for all users and support programs aimed at eliminating all traffic-related serious injuries and fatalities.
  - **Speed limits:** Support proposals that would allow local jurisdictions to reduce speed limits on both local roads and state highways and work with state representatives to modify the California Vehicle Code to allow for prima facie speed limits of 25 mph on state highways.
that function as main streets, especially in business and school zones to address findings and

to address other recommendations of the AB2363 Zero Traffic Fatalities Task Force report.

o Traffic Laws & Enforcement: Support proposals to increase enforcement and modification of
traffic laws to better protect pedestrians and bicyclists, including proposals to authorize
automated speed enforcement on a pilot program basis, and modifications to vehicle code to
allow vehicles to cross a double-yellow line when passing cyclists.

o Education: Support commercial driver, bus driver, motorist, bicyclist, and Safe Routes to
Schools training and education programs which reduce collisions.

• Active Transportation Facilities: Support modification to rules, regulations, and government
codes that will make roadways more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly, including: laws associated
with sharing the road; ensuring complete streets components (e.g. accessible pedestrian signals)
are considered during the design of all projects; increasing funds for pedestrian, bicycle, and new
micro-mobility devices and services (e.g. bike share), and safety countermeasures (e.g. buffered
or protected bike lanes); increasing funds to provide resources necessary for First/Last Mile
improvements; Safe Routes to School Programs; and providing additional direction and
consistency for accessible pedestrian design.

• Land Use/Housing/Transportation Coordination:
  o Support efforts to reduce vehicles miles traveled and promote job-housing balance which also
  protect locally-driven land use planning that implements broad policy goals set by the state to
  provide affordable housing in transit-rich areas. Encourage new developments to incentivize
  active transportation and transit use. Ensure SB743 (Steinberg, 2013) implementation
  supports infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and
  expedites transportation project delivery. Support innovative measures to mitigate growth in
  vehicle miles traveled, such as regional mitigation banks.

  o Support state goals to reduce homelessness. Monitor implementation of Governor Newsom’s
  Executive Order N-23-20 which requires Caltrans to develop a model lease template to allow
  counties and cities to use Caltrans property adjacent to highways or state roads for short-term
  emergency homelessness shelter; and requests that special districts, cities, counties, and
  transit agencies, and others to examine their ability to provide shelter and house homeless
  individuals.

  o Support efforts to streamline SB375 implementation and extend timeframe between required
  Regional Transportation Plan updates.

• FAST Act Implementation: Support legislation and administrative strategies to implement the
FAST federal authorization bill, in a way that ensures the best possible outcome for transportation
projects in Santa Cruz County.

• SHOPP Program:
  o Support Caltrans’ efforts to provide more outreach regarding State Highway Operation and
Protection Program (SHOPP) projects and to include measureable targets for improving the
state highway system. Support clarification of existing laws to permit the expenditure of
SHOPP funds for operational projects on state highways.

  o Support inclusion of complete streets within SHOPP projects, as appropriate, but especially in
areas where state highways serve as main streets, such as Highway 9 and Highway 152 in
Santa Cruz County.
• **Commuter Programs:** Expand statutory authority for regions statewide to adopt and implement programs aimed at reducing trips and vehicle miles traveled, such as a regional commuter benefits ordinance similar to the successful program in the Bay Area. Support dedicated funding for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs and strategies.

• **Shared Mobility Systems:** Support policies that enable technological innovations to improve mobility, while protecting the public’s interest. Monitor legislation and regulations related to shared mobility, such as transportation network companies (TNCs) and real-time carpooling, to ensure that mobility benefits are maximized, especially for underserved populations, and access to critical data for transportation and land-use planning and operational purposes is assured. Support measures that allow for local control and regulation of shared mobility systems such as scooters, bikes, and other fleets.

• **Connected and Autonomous Vehicles:** Monitor and engage in legislation and regulations to facilitate deployment of connected vehicles and autonomous vehicles. Oppose federal efforts to preempt local authority over the use of autonomous vehicles in their communities. In partnership with California cities and counties, transit agencies, the business community, and other transportation organizations, engage in regulatory and legislative efforts related to connected and autonomous vehicles with the goal of accelerating their safety, mobility, environmental, equity and economic benefits. Similar to the “shared mobility” strategy, support access to critical data for transportation and land use planning and operational purposes.

• **Electrification** of vehicle fleets: Support funding and coordination, including policy, planning, and infrastructure, for vehicle electrification. Support reduced utility pricing for public transit electric vehicle fleets.

• **Resilience:** Support programs and increased funding necessary for communities to have resilient transportation infrastructure designed with the consequences of climate change and resulting natural disasters in mind. Monitor implementation efforts of Executive Order N-19-19, which directs the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) to invest its annual $5 billion portfolio to help reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, and to ensure that state funds, specifically SB 1 funds, continue to be used for transportation purposes.

• **Encroachments:** Support legislation that clarifies the authority under which rail property owners may remove, or by notice may require the removal of encroachments.

• **Unfunded Mandates:** Oppose unfunded mandates and seek funding for mandates imposed in recent years. Require new regulatory proposals to include an estimate of the cost and impact such proposals will have in the delivery of California’s transportation program.
• **Priority Projects:** Seek and preserve funding for priority transportation projects and programs in Santa Cruz County, including:
  - Projects on Highway 1
  - Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line
  - Transit operations and capital projects
  - Local street and roadway preservation
  - Bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST/Rail Trail)

• **Stabilize and Increase Funding**
  - **Increase funding levels** for all modes to bring transportation infrastructure up to a good state of repair and meet growing transportation needs in Santa Cruz County. Support increase and index of federal fuel taxes that are available for projects in Santa Cruz County.
  - **Infrastructure Initiative:** Ensure any new infrastructure funding initiative increases transportation investment opportunities for projects in Santa Cruz County, including funding for the existing Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) and Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) programs and formula fund programs. Any infrastructure package should adhere to traditional match requirements, so as not to disadvantage projects in Santa Cruz County in accessing those funds. The initiative should include a significant investment of **new** federal funds for transportation, stabilize the Highway Trust Fund and not be offset by reductions to other federal programs serving Santa Cruz County residents.
  - Support federal grant or pilot programs for comprehensive planning that supports **Transit Oriented Development (TOD)** opportunities to connect housing, jobs, and mixed-use development with transportation options.
  - **BUILD:** Maintain the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD, formerly TIGER) grant program at or above current levels.
  - **Develop new funding mechanisms** that ensure the financial integrity of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) and Mass Transportation Account. Without any new sources of dedicated revenue, the HTF would need an infusion of over $100 billion from the General Fund simply to fund highway and transit programs at their current levels from 2021 through 2025.
  - **Innovative Financing:** Ensure proposals for public-private partnerships and innovative financing are favorable for project implementation in Santa Cruz County. Support and expand the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program and make the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) program more accessible to smaller public agencies.
  - **Defend Fiscal Year 2020/21 appropriations.** Ensure that Congress appropriates funding consistent with amounts authorized in the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.
  - **Oppose rescissions or arbitrary cuts** that could reduce funding for transportation projects in Santa Cruz County.
  - **Support transparent congressionally-directed spending** (earmarks) to allow for Congressional support of priority projects in Santa Cruz County.
  - Oppose efforts to withhold federal funds from jurisdictions not in compliance with federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement law, or from “sanctuary” jurisdictions.
• **Disaster Recovery:** Work with local and state partners to ensure federal government provides sufficient emergency relief appropriations and federal agency resources to support rebuilding and recovery efforts. Support legislative efforts to extend the timeframe for road projects qualifying for federal disaster reimbursement to move to the construction phase from two years to six years.

• **Protect and expand transportation fringe benefits.** Reinstate the commuter benefit, which was eliminated under the tax reform bill. In addition, advocate for expanding pre-tax transportation fringe benefit eligibility to include shared mobility options, such as bike-share and shared ride carpool services.

• **Transportation Act Implementation and Reauthorization**
  o Support legislation and administrative strategies to implement a fully funded federal authorization bill, in a way that ensures the best possible outcome for transportation projects in Santa Cruz County. Ensure that U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) implementation of MAP-21 and FAST Act rules and regulations do not have a negative impact on local projects and programs.
  o **Reauthorization:** As Congress works on reauthorization of the FAST Act, which expires in September 2020, support California’s reauthorization principles, a long-term reauthorization of the Act with increases to programs that provide funds for projects in Santa Cruz County. Support creation of a new, dedicated bridge investment program that makes funds available to local entities to address the backlog of bridges in poor condition nationwide.
  o **Active Transportation:** Support continued funding for pedestrian and bicycle projects.
  o **Transit:** Support increased funding for transit, including continued and accelerated growth of the Small Transit Intensive Cities Program (STIC), funding for acquisition of transit capital (Bus and Bus Facilities, and Low and No Emissions Bus Programs), Capital Investment Grants, funding for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) implementation, state of good repair, and other transit programs, and support tax credits for the purchase of electric buses.
  o Support a reauthorization bill that includes incentive funding to reward self-help jurisdictions.
  o Oppose **unfunded mandates** and support legislation that provides funding for past mandates.

• **Performance Measures:** Support development of appropriate performance measures which are consistent with RTC approved goals, policies, and targets and which recognize data limitations of many regions. Support open collaboration, data sharing and funding to successfully implement state and federal performance-based planning and management requirements.

• **Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Support development of new funding programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation (similar to those included in the Senate FAST Act reauthorization bill (S. 2302)), expand eligibility for CMAQ and other funding programs to Santa Cruz County. Support federal funding, tax credits, and coordination of vehicle electrification purchase (including buses), planning and infrastructure. Defend against rollbacks of California’s air quality and climate change laws and regulation, such as fuel efficiency standards and cap-and-trade programs.

• **Climate Change and Resiliency:** Strengthen federal partnership to support resiliency and climate change preparedness and efforts that could support local efforts to improve resiliency, respond to new or worsening storm, fire, and other environmental hazards and meet regional
climate goals. Support efforts to increase planning funds that help regional governments address climate change and make regional transportation infrastructure more resilient.

- **Autonomous Vehicles**: Oppose federal efforts to preempt local authority to regulate the use of autonomous vehicles in their communities.

- **Streamline Project Delivery**: Support regulations to streamline and integrate federal project delivery requirements for project planning, development, review, permitting, and environmental processes in order to reduce project costs and delays.

s:\legisl\2020\2020-rtc-legislativeprograms-approved020620.docx